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Rev. Richard Baxter



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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS

OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.



THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF
THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
AND
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE
REV. WILLIAM ORME,
AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.;" "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

IN TWENTY-THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. VIII.

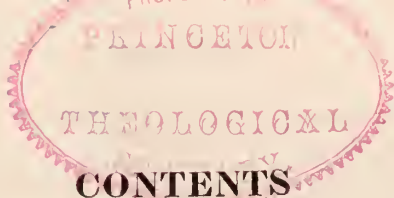
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OF

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DIRECTIONS

AND

PERSUASIONS

TO

SOUND CONVERSION.

FOR

PREVENTION OF THAT DECEIT AND DAMNATION OF SOULS, AND
OF THOSE SCANDALS, HERESIES, AND DESPERATE
APOSTACIES, THAT ARE THE CONSEQUENTS
OF A COUNTERFEIT OR SUPERFICIAL
CHANGE.

PREFACE.

It is a weight so unconceivable that dependeth on the soundness of conversion and sanctification, that our care and diligence cannot be too great to make it sure. As the professed atheist, heathens, and infidels without, so the self-deceiving hypocrites within the church, do wilfully cast away themselves for ever, by neglecting such a business of everlasting consequence, when they have time, and warnings, and assistance to dispatch it. Multitudes live like brutes or atheists, forgetting that they are born in sin and misery, and settled in it by wilful custom, and must be converted or condemned. These know not (many of them) what need they have of a conversion, nor what conversion or sanctification is. And some that have been Preachers of the Gospel, have been so lamentably ignorant in so great a matter, that they have persuaded the poor deluded people that it is only the gross and heinous sinners that need conversion; branding them with the name of Puritans, that will not take a dead profession joined with civility, for true sanctification; and promise salvation to those, that Christ hath with many asseverations professed shall not enter into the kingdom of God. Others that confess that a thorough sanctification is a necessary thing, do delude their souls with something that is like it. Hence is the misery and dishonour of the church. Holiness itself is disgraced by the sins of them that are unholy, because they pretend to that which they have not. Hence it is, that we have thousands that call themselves Christians, that live a worldly, fleshly life, and some of them hating the way of godliness and yet think they are converted, because they are sorry when they have sinned, and wish when it is past that they had not done it, and cry God mercy for it, and confess that they are sinners; and this they take for true repentance: when sin was never mortified in their souls, nor their hearts ever brought

to hate it, and forsake it ; but when they have had the profit and pleasure of sin, they are sorry for the danger, but never regenerate and made new creatures by the Spirit of Christ. Hence also it is, that we have such abundance of mere opinionists, that take themselves for religious people. Because they have changed their opinions, and their parties, and can prate contentiously against those that are not of their mind, and join themselves with those that seem to be the strictest, they take themselves to be truly sanctified : and this makes such gadding from one opinion to another, and such censuring, reviling, and divisions, upon that account, because their religion is most in their opinions, and hath not mortified their carnal, selfish inclinations and passions, nor brought them to a holy, heavenly mind. Hence also it is, that we have so many sensual, scandalous professors, that seem to be religious, but bridle not their tongues, their appetites, or their lusts, but are railers, or backbiters, or tipplers, or gluttons, or filthy and lascivious, or some way scandalous to their holy profession, because they are strangers to a thorough conversion, but take up with the counterfeit of a superficial change. Hence also we have so many worldlings, that think themselves religious men ; that make Christ but a servant to their worldly interest, and seek heaven but for a reserve, when earth forsakes them, and have something in this world that is so dear to them that they cannot forsake it for the hopes of glory ; but give up themselves to Christ, with secret exceptions and reserves, for their prosperity in the world : and all because they never knew a sound conversion, which should have rooted out of their hearts this worldly interest, and delivered them up entirely, and absolutely to Christ. Hence also it is that we have so few professors that can lay by their pride, and bear disesteem or injury, and love their enemies, and bless them that curse them, yea, or love their godly friends that cross them, or dishonour them. And so few that can deny themselves in their honour, or any considerable thing, for the sake of Christ, and in obedience, and conformity to his will. And all because they never had that saving change, that takes down self, and sets up Christ as Sovereign in the soul. And hence also it is that we have in this age so many dreadful instances of apostasy : so many reproaching the Scripture, that once they thought had converted them, and the

way of holiness, that once they did profess; and denying the Lord himself that bought them; and all because they formerly took up with a superficial, counterfeit conversion. O how commonly, and how lamentably doth this misery appear among professors in their unsavoury discourse, their strife and envy, on religious pretences, their dead formality, their passionate divisions, or their selfish, proud, and earthly minds! A thorough conversion would have cured all this, at least as to the dominion of it.

Having therefore in my "Call to the Unconverted" endeavoured to awaken careless souls, and persuade the obstinate to turn and live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some directions and persuasions, to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that hypocrisy which else they are like to be formed into, and the deceit of their hearts, the error of their lives, and the misery at their death, which is like to follow. That they live not as those that flatter God with their mouths, and "lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart is not right with him, neither are they steadfast in his covenant ^a." Lest denying deep entertainment, and rooting to the seed of life, or choaking it by the radicated, predominant love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth ^b: and lest building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great ^c: and so "they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us ^d." Look therefore to this great, important business, "and give all diligence to make your calling and election sure ^e." And trust not your hearts too easily, or too confidently; "but turn to the Lord with all your hearts ^f." Cleave to him resolvedly, or with purpose of heart ^g: and see that you sell all and buy the pearl ^h: and stick not at the price, but absolutely resign yourselves to Christ, and turn to him, as Zaccheus and other primitive converts did, surrendering all that you have unto his will ⁱ. Leave not any root of bitterness behind; make no exceptions, or reserves; but deny

^a Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37.

^d 1 John ii. 19.

^g Acts xi. 23.

^b Matt. xlii. 20—22.

^e 2 Pet. i. 10.

^h Matt. xiii. 46.

^c Matt. vii. 26, 27.

^f Joel ii. 12.

ⁱ Luke xix. 8, 9.

yourselves : forsake all, and follow him that hath led you this self-denying way ; and trust to his blood, and merits, and promise, for a treasure in heaven, and then you are his disciples, and true Christians indeed ^k. Reader, if thou heartily make this covenant and keep it, thou shalt find that Christ will not deceive thee, when the world deceiveth them that chose it, in their greatest extremity ; but if thou draw back, and think these terms too hard, remember that everlasting life was offered thee, and remember why and for what thou didst reject it. And if in this life-time thou wilt have thy good things, expect to be tormented, when the believing, self-denying souls are comforted.

RICHARD BAXTER.

May 29, 1658.

^k Luke xiv. 18. 24, 25. 33.

^l Luke xvi. 25.

THEOLOGICAL
DIRECTIONS

AND

PERSUASIONS

TO A

SOUND CONVERSION.

Directions to Sinners that are purposed to Turn, and are under the Work of Conversion : that it Miscarry not.

THE first and greatest matter in the seeking after the salvation of our souls, is, to be sure that we lay the foundation well, and that the work of conversion be thoroughly wrought. To this end I have already used many persuasions with the unconverted to return, as thinking all further directions vain, till we have persuaded men to a consent and willingness to practise them. And in the end of that discourse I added a few directions for the use of such as are willing to be converted. But because I know that this is a matter of exceeding consequence, I dare not thus leave it, before I have added some further directions, to prevent the miscarrying of this work where it is begun. And lest I should lose my labour, through the unpreparedness of the reader ; I shall first give you some preparing considerations, which may awaken you to the practice of the directions which I shall give you.

1. Consider first, that half-conversions are the undoing of many thousand souls. If you are but like Agrippa, (Acts xxvi. 28.) “ almost persuaded to be Christians,” you will be but almost saved. Many a thousand that are now past help, have had the word come near them, and cast them into

a fear, and made some stir and trouble in their souls, awakening their consciences, and forcing them to some good purposes and promises, yea, and bringing them to the performance of a half-reformation ; but this is not it that will serve your turn. Many have been so much changed, as not to be far from the kingdom of God, that yet came short of it ; Mark xii. 34. There is no promise in Scripture that you shall be pardoned if you almost repent and believe ; or be saved, if you be almost sanctified and obedient ; but on the contrary, the Lord hath plainly resolved, that you must turn or die, though you almost turn ; and repent, or perish, though you almost repent ; and that you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, without conversion and a new birth, though you came never so near it. God hath resolved upon the terms of your salvation ; and it is in vain to hope for salvation upon any other terms. God will not change nor come down to your terms : it is you that must change and come quite over to his terms, or you are lost for ever. If you come never so near them, you are but lost men if you come not up to them. The Lord well knew what he did, when he made his covenant and law, and he imposed nothing on the sons of men but what his infinite wisdom told him it was fit for him to impose ; and he will not now compound with sinners, and take less than he requireth ; that is, less than the preeminency in their hearts ; nor will he ever come down to any lower terms with you, than those which he propoundeth to you in his Gospel. And therefore, poor sinners, as you love your souls, do not stand dodging and halving with God ; but give up yourselves entirely to him ; and do not stop at the beginnings of a conversion, but go through with it, till you are become new creatures indeed, or you are undone when you have done all. A half, unsound convert will as certainly perish as a drunkard or a whoremonger, though his torment may not be so great.

2. Consider also, that if you do not go through with the work when you are upon it, you may perhaps make it more difficult than it was before ever you meddled with it, and make it a very doubtful case whether ever it will be done. As it is with a wound or other sore ; if you tamper with it with salves that are not agreeable to it, or are disorderly applied ; or if you skin it over before it be searched to the bottom, it must be opened again, and will cost you double

pain before it be cured. Or as I have seen it with some that have had a bone broken, or out of joint, and it hath been set amiss at first : O what torments were the poor creatures fain to undergo, in having it broken, or stretched and set again ! which might have been spared, if it had been thoroughly done at first. So, if you will be shrinking and drawing back, and favouring your flesh, and will not go to the quick, you will make your conversion much more difficult ; you must be brought to it again, and fetch your groans yet deeper than before ; and weep over all your former tears ; your doubts will be multiplied ; your fears and sorrows will be increased ; and all will go sorer with you than at first. O what a case will you be in, when your sores must be lanced a second time, and your bones, as it were, broken again ! Then you will wish you had gone through with it at the first.

Yea, perhaps you may put God to it to fetch you in by some sharp affliction, and send out so boisterous and churlish a messenger to call you home as may make you wish you had hearkened to a more gentle call : when the sheep will straggle, the dog must be sent to affright them home. Many a foolish sinner makes light of the gentle invitations of grace, and they stand hovering between their sins and Christ ; and sometimes they have a mind to turn, and the next temptation they are off again, and then they come on again coldly and with half a heart ; and thus they stand trifling with the God of heaven till he is fain to take another course with them, and resolves to use some sharper means : and when he layeth them under his rod, and they can neither fly from, nor resist him, but see that their lives and souls are at his mercy, then they begin to look about them, and see their folly, and change their minds. You can tarry, and delay, and dally with the dreadful God, in the time of your prosperity, and we may ask you over and over whether you will turn before we can have a hearty answer ; but what will you do when God shall begin to frown, and when he takes you in hand by his irresistible power, and lets loose upon you the terrors of his wrath ? Will you then make as light of his mercy as you do now ? Have you not read, Dan. v. 6. how small an apparition of his anger did make a carousing king look pale, and his joints to tremble in the midst of his joviality ? A Manasseh will bethink himself and come in when

he is laid in irons, though he could set light by God before ; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13. If Jonah will run away from God, he can send a boisterous messenger to arrest him, and cast him as it were into the belly of hell, and make him cry for mercy to him that he disobeyed. So if you will stand trifling with God, and will not by fair means be persuaded to yield and come away, you may shortly look to hear from him in another manner ; for he hath a voice that will make the proudest face look pale, and the most stubborn heart to tremble. If an idle, stubborn child will not learn nor be ruled, the master or parent will teach him with the rod, and give him a lash, and ask him, ‘ Will you yet learn ? ’ and another lash, and ask him, ‘ What say you now, will you yet obey ? ’ So will God do by you, if he love you, and mean to save you : when he hath taken away your wealth, your friends, your children, will you then hearken to him or will you not ? When you lie groaning on your couch, and all your parts are overwhelmed with pains, and death begins to lay hands upon you, and bids you now come and answer for your rebellions and delays before the living God, what will you do then ? Will you turn or not ? O the lamentable folly of sinners, that put themselves to so much sorrow, and great calamity for themselves ! When sickness comes, and death draws near, you beg, and cry, and groan, and promise : when you feel the rod, what Christians will you then be ? And why not without so much ado ? You then think God deals somewhat hardly with you : and why will you not turn then by gentler means ? You might spare yourselves much of this misery if you would ; and you will not. Is it a seemingly thing for a man to be driven to heaven by scourges ? Is God so bad a master, and heaven so bad a place, that you will not turn to them, and mind them, and seek them, till there be no remedy, and you are, as it were, driven to it against your will ? Is the world such an inheritance, and sin so good a thing, and the flesh or devil so good a master, that you will not leave them till you are whipped away ? What a shameful, unreasonable course is this ?

Well sirs, the case is plain before you. Turn you must at one time or other, or be the firebrands of hell. And seeing it is a thing that must be done, were it not best for you to take the easiest and the surest way to do it ? Why, this is the easiest and the surest way ; even to strike while the iron

is hot, before it cool again ; and to go through with it when God doth move you and persuade you ; if you love your flesh itself, do not put him to take up the rod, and fetch you home by stripes and terrors.

But that is not the worst ; for it will sorely hazard the work itself, and consequently your salvation, if you do not go through with it at the first attempt. I know there is many an one that hath been converted and saved, after many purposes, and promises, and half-conversions. But yet I must tell you, that this is a very dangerous course : for you do not know when you grieve the Spirit of grace, and set so light by mercy when it is offered you, whether that Spirit may not utterly forsake you, and leave you to your own ungodly wills, and let you take your lusts, and pleasures, and say, ‘ Let this wretch be filthy still ; let him keep his drunkenness, his companions, his worldliness, and the curse of God with them, till he have tried what it is that they will do for him : let him follow his own conceits, and the pride and obstinacy of his own heart, till he find whither they will bring him : let him serve the flesh and the world, till he understand whether God or they be the better master. Seeing he will not be wise on earth, let him learn in hell, and let torments teach him, seeing mercy might not teach him.’ O poor soul ! what a case art thou in, if this should once be the resolution of God !

Moreover, you may easily know that the longer you stay, the more leisure you give the devil to assault you, and to try one way when he cannot prevail by another, and to strengthen his temptations : like a foolish soldier, that will stand still to be shot at, rather than assault the enemy.

And the longer you delay, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend a twig, how will you be able to bend it when it is a tree ? If you cannot pluck up a tender plant, are you likely to pluck up a sturdy oak ? Custom gives strength and root to vices. A blackamoor may as well change his skin, or a leopard his spots, as those that are accustomed to do evil, can learn to do well. Jer. xiii. 23.

If you stick at conversion as a difficult matter to-day, it will be more difficult to-morrow, or the next month, and the next year, than it is now.

Yea, the very resistance of the Spirit doth harden the heart, and the delays and triflings of the soul do bring it to

an insensibility and boldness in sin, and drive away the fear of God from the heart. Now it may be you are somewhat awakened, and begin to see that you must turn or die ; but if you trifle and delay, this light may be gone, and leave you in greater darkness than before ; and the voice that now awakeneth you, may be silent and leave you to fall asleep again.

Moreover, you know that you are uncertain of the continuance of the Gospel. You know not whether you shall have such lively, serious preachers as you now have, nor you know not whether you shall have such godly neighbours and company to encourage you and help you in the work. God will remove them one after another to himself, and then you will have fewer prayers for you, and fewer warnings, and good examples, and perhaps be left wholly to the company of deceived, ungodly fools, that will do nothing but hinder and discourage you from conversion. And you are not sure that religion will continue in that reputation as now it is in. The times may turn, before you turn ; and godliness may become a scorn again, and, it may be, a matter of suffering, and may cost you your lives to live as the servants of Christ must do. And therefore if you stop at it now as a difficult thing, when you have all the helps and encouragements that you can expect, and the way to heaven is made so fair ; and when magistrates, and ministers, and neighbours are ready to encourage and help you ; what will you do in times of persecution and discouragement ? If you cannot turn when you have all these helps and means, what will you do when they are taken from you ? If you cannot row with the stream, how will you row against it ? If you dare not set to sea, when you have wind, and tide, and sunshine, what will you do in storms and tempests, when all is against you ? O what would some of your forefathers have given to have seen the days that you see ! How glad would many a thousand in other countries of the world be, to have but the helps to heaven that you have ? Never look to have the way fairer and easier while you live. If you think heaven is offered you at too dear a rate now, you may even let it go, and try whether hell be better ; for the next offer is like to be upon harder terms rather than easier. If you cannot now find in your hearts to turn and live a holy life, what would you have done in the days of the apostles, or ancient Christians ?

And, what would you have done in Spain or Italy, where it would cost you your lives? He that will not be converted now, but thinks the terms of grace too hard, is so impious a despiser of Christ and heaven, that it is no wonder if God resolve that he shall never taste of the salvation that was offered him. Luke xiv. 24.

Moreover, you know upon what uncertainties you hold your lives; you have no assurance of them for an hour, but you are sure that they are passing away whilst you delay. And will you trifle then in a work that must be done? What a case are you in, if death find you unconverted! The heart of man is not able now to conceive the misery of your case. How dare you venture to live another day in an unconverted state, lest death should find you so? Are you not afraid when you lie down at night, and afraid when you go out of your doors in the morning, lest death surprise you before you are converted? If you be not, it is long of your deadness and presumption.

And I would fain hear what it is that should thus stop you. What are you afraid of? Is God an enemy, that you are loath to come to him? Is the devil a friend, that you are so loath to leave him? Is sin a paradise? Is holiness a misery? Is it a pleasanter life to love your money, or your lands, or your meat and drink, and lusts, than to love the most blessed God, the Creator of the world, the life of our souls, and our eternal felicity? Is it better to pamper a carcase that must shortly stink as the dung, than to provide for a living immortal soul? Whether do you think that earth or heaven will be the more glorious and durable felicity?

What is it, sirs, that you stick at, that you make so many delays before you will turn? Is there any difficulty in the point? Do you think it a hard question whether you should turn or not? Why, how can you be so blind? Do you stand pausing upon the business, as if it were a doubt, whether God or the world were better, and whether sin or holiness, Christ or death, heaven or hell, were to be preferred? I pray you, consider; can you reasonably think that conversion will do you any harm? Can it bring you into a worse condition than you are in? Sure you cannot fear such a thing; you are in your blood; you are dead in sin; you are children of wrath, while you are unconverted; you are under the curse of the law of God; you are the slaves of the devil, you are the heirs

of hell, and under the guilt of all your sins ; your life is a continued rebellion against God ; you are employed every day in the destroying of yourselves, in kindling the flames that must everlastingly torment you, and laying in fuel for the perpetuating of your misery ; and fighting against your friends, that would deliver you, and unthankfully abusing Christ, and grace, and ministers, and friends, that would save your souls. This is the condition that every one of you is in, till you are converted. And can you fear lest conversion would bring you into a worse condition than this ? Sirs, these truths are sure and plain ; and if yet you stick at it, your error is so palpably gross, that unless you are madmen, I may be bold to say it is a wilful error. And if you love to be deceived, and wilfully choose a lie, you must take that you get by it.

3. Consider further, That half-conversions do often prove an occasion of deluding men's souls, and making them quiet in a miserable state, and so of keeping them from being converted to the last. If you had never done any thing in it, you would more easily be persuaded that your case is bad, and that there is still a necessity of your change. But when you have had some convictions, and troubles of mind, and fears, and sorrows, and so have fallen into an outside, partial reformation, and now are persuaded that you are truly converted, when it is no such matter, what a dangerous impediment to your conversion may this prove ? And all because you slubber over the work, and cut it off before it reacheth to sincerity, and strive against the workings of the Spirit, and break away from your physician before he hath done the cure, and would not follow it on to the end. I know that a half-conversion, if it be known to be no more, is much better than none ; and doth often prepare men for a saving work. But when this half-conversion is taken to be a true and saving change, as too commonly it is, it proves one of the greatest impediments of salvation. Whenever Christ shall afterward knock at your door, you will not know him, as thinking he dwells with you already. If you read any books that call on you to be converted, or hear any preachers that call on you to turn, you have this at hand to cozen yourselves with, and frustrate all. You will think, ' This is not spoken to me ; for I am converted already.' O how quietly do such poor, deluded sinners, daily read and hear their own doom

and misery, and never once dream that they are the men that are meant, and therefore are never dismayed at the matter! This formeth you into a state of hypocrisy, and makes the course of your duties and your lives to be hypocritical. If another man that knows himself to be still unconverted, do but read the threatenings of the word against such, or hear of the terrors of the Lord from a minister, he may be brought to confess that this is his own case, and so to perceive the misery of his condition. But when such as you do read and hear these things, they never trouble you, for you think that they do not touch you: you are Scripture-proof, and sermon-proof: and all by the delusion of your half-conversion. O how zealously will such a man cry out against the sins of others! and tell them of their misery, and persuade them to turn, and shew them the danger that is near them if they do not: and in the meantime little thinks that it is his own case, and that he speaks all this against his own soul. How will such men applaud a sermon that drives at the conversion of a sinner, and that tells them their misery while they are unconverted! 'O thinks he, this touched such and such; I am glad that such a man and such a man heard it:' and he little thinks that it as nearly touched himself. How smoothly will he go on in any discourse against wicked, unregenerate men, as David heard the parable of Nathan, and it never once entereth into their thoughts, that they speak all this against themselves; till the Judge shall tell them, when it is too late, "Thou art the man." It will turn not only the stream of your thoughts into hypocrisy and self-deceit, but also the stream of your speeches to others; yea, and the current of your prayers, and all the rest of your religious performances. When in confession you should acknowledge and lament an unregenerate, carnal state, you will only confess that you have the infirmities of the saints, and that you have this or that sin, which yet you think is mortified. When you should importunately beg for renewing grace, you will beg only for strengthening grace, or assurance; when you should be labouring to break your hearts, you will be studying to heal them; and will be hearkening after present comforts, when you have more need of godly sorrow. It will fill your mouths in prayer with pharisaical thanksgivings for the mercies of regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, which you never received.

Little doth many a soul know what sanctification, and the several graces of the Spirit are, that use to give God thanks for them: there is many and many an one that must for ever be in hell, that were used in their prayers to give God thanks for their hopes of glory: and the common cause of all this deceit and misery, is, that men do run from under the hands of their physician, before he ever went to the bottom of their sore, and go away with a half-conversion, and so spend all the rest of their lives, in a mere delusion, as verily thinking they are converted, when they are not. How confidently will such receive the Lord's supper, and thrust themselves into the communion of the saints, as if they had as good right as others to be there, till the Lord of the feast shall take them to task, and say, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" and then they will be speechless; Matt. xxii. 12. How many false, deceiving comforts, and perhaps even seeming raptures and assurance, may these have in themselves, as verily thinking their case is good, when, alas, they never yet laid the foundation. Yea, and it is to be observed, that satan is a friend to the comforts of this kind of men, and therefore will do all that he can to promote them; for he would willingly keep his garrison in peace; Luke xi. 21. And therefore he may possibly be a comforting spirit to them himself, and imitate the Holy Ghost the Comforter of the saints; and, it may be, give them such raptures as seem higher than those which the Spirit of holiness doth give. He envieth the saints their peace and comfort, because he foresees how durable they will prove: but he can be content that deluded hypocrites may have joy, because their comforts do not weaken but strengthen his kingdom within them, and he knows they are like to endure but for awhile.

And thus you may perceive, how hard it is to convert one of these half-converted men, that have strangled the new creature as it were, in the birth, and that are fortified against all the means of grace, by a false conceit that they are sanctified already. See therefore that you make sure work, and take not up in the middle, and with halves, but take your present time, and give up your souls to a total change.

4. Consider, If you take up short of a thorough conversion, you lose all your labour, and sufferings and hopes, as to the matter of your salvation.

And what pity is it that so much should be lost ? Alas, to see many of our hearers touched at a sermon, and come to a minister and bewail their sin, and seem to be humbled, and promise to be new men, and yet all this to be lost ; how sad a case is this to think of ? To see them leave their company and former course of life, and come among the professors of holiness, and all men take them for real converts ; and yet all this to be lost, and their souls lost after all : how sad a case is this ! If you grow up to the greatest parts for outward duty, and be able to discourse, or pray, or preach, even to the admiration of the hearers ; yet if you do not ground this on a thorough conversion, all is but lost, as to your own salvation. If you keep up the highest strain of profession, and get the highest esteem in the church, so that others depend on you as oracles ; yea, if the pope with all his infallibility should canonize you for saints ; it were all but loss. If you should keep up the most confident persuasion of your salvation, and hope to go to heaven, to the last hour of your lives ; it were all but lost if you build not all on a thorough conversion. Yea, if you should be taken by persecutors for one of the party to which you join, and should suffer for the cause of religion among them ; all were but lost, without a sound conversion ; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

It is a pitiful case to see some poor unsanctified souls, how they wander and change from one opinion to another, and from party to party, to find out that which they want within. They turn to this party first, and that party next, and then to another, and then think they are sure in the way to heaven, when they never thoroughly turned to God by Jesus Christ ; and therefore are certainly out of the way, whatever party it be that they join with. Some go to the giddy sects that make the highest pretences to strictness : and some go to Rome, because they think that there they shall have more company, and hear the deluding sound of unity, universality, antiquity, succession, miracles, and such like : and then they think they have hit the way. Alas, poor souls ! If God were but nearest and dearest to your hearts, and Christ and his righteousness exalted within you, and your souls unfeignedly turned from your sins, you would be in the certain way to heaven, in what country, or company, or church soever you were ; supposing that you believe and do nothing there, which is inconsistent with this life of grace.

(Though yet every Christian should choose that particular society, if he can, where he may not only be saved, but most certainly saved, and find the greatest helps, and least hindrances, or else where he may do God the greatest service.) But choose what company you will in the world, the strictest, the most reformed, the most splendid in outward pomp and glory, or of whatever excellency else you may imagine, you will never be saved in it yourselves, as long as your hearts are unconverted. I know the Papists have found out many devices, by sacraments, and ceremonies, and the merits of the saints, to patch up the defect of a thorough conversion; but all are mere delusions that pretend to such a thing.

O then think of this, poor sinner: hast thou gone so far, and done so much, and shall all be lost because thou wilt not follow it to the end? Hast thou groaned, and wept, and confessed, and bemoaned thine own condition? Hast thou prayed, and read, and heard, and fasted, and changed thy company, and much of thy course of life? And shall all this be lost, for want of going to the bottom, and making a thorough work of it? What a loss will this be?

5. Consider also, What an admirable help and advantage it will be to you through the whole course of your lives, if the work of conversion be once thoroughly wrought. I will shew you this in some particulars.

(1.) It will be an excellent help to your understandings, against the grosser errors of the world, and will establish you in the truth much more than mere arguments can do; for you will be able to speak for the truth from feeling and experience: he that hath the law written both in his Bible and in his heart, is likely to hold it faster than he that hath it in his Bible alone. But of this I have spoken already in my "Treatise against Infidelity," Part ii.

(2.) If you be but thoroughly converted, you will have that within you which will be a continual help against temptations: you have not only experience of the mischief of sinning, and the folly of those reasons that are brought for its defence; but you have also a new nature, which is against the temptation, as life is against poison: and as it is a great disadvantage to the law of Christ, that it speaks against the nature of the ungodly; so is it a disadvantage to the temptations of the devil, that they would draw a Christian against

his new nature. You have that within you that will plead more effectually against sensuality, uncharitableness, pride or worldliness, or any the like sin, than learning or reason alone can do. (As in the forecited book I have further manifested.)

(3.) If conversion be thoroughly wrought, you will have within you a continual helper of your graces, and a remembrancer to put you in mind of duty, and a spur to put you on to the performance, and a furtherer of your souls in the performance itself: it is out of this spark and principle within you, that the Holy Ghost doth raise the acts of grace. This is it that the word, and prayer, and conference, and sacraments, and all the means of grace must work upon. If we see you do amiss, we have hopes that you will hear us; if we plainly reprove you, we may look you should take it in good part: for you have that within you that saith as we say, and is at deadly enmity with the sin which we reprove. If we provoke you to love and to good works, we dare almost promise ourselves that you will obey; for you have that within you that disposeth you to the duty, and preacheth our sermons to you over again. O what an advantage it is to our teaching, when you are all taught of God within, as well as by his messengers without! But when we speak to the unconverted, we have little to work upon: we give physic to the dead; we speak all against the bent of their souls; and every reproof and exhortation to holiness goes against their very natures; and therefore what wonder if we have the smaller hopes to prevail?

(4.) If the work be thoroughly done at first, it will help to resolve many doubts that may be afterwards cast into your minds: you need not be still at a loss and looking behind you, and questioning your foundation, but may go cheerfully and boldly on. O what an excellent encouragement is this! to know that you have hitherto made good your ground, and left all safe and sure behind you, and have nothing to do but to look before you; and press on towards the mark till you lay hold upon the prize: whereas if you be in any great doubt of your conversion, it will be stopping you and discouraging you in all your work; you will be still looking behind you, and saying, 'What if I should yet be unconverted?' when you should cheerfully address yourselves to prayer or sacraments, how sadly will you go, as be-

ing utterly uncertain whether you have a saving right to them; or whether God will accept a sacrifice at your hand? When you should grow and go forward, you will have little heart to it, because you know not whether you are yet in the way; and this will damp your life and comfort in every duty, when you must say, 'I know not whether yet I be thoroughly converted.' O therefore stop not the work at first.

(5.) And lastly, If the work be thoroughly done at first you will persevere, when others fall away. You will have rooting in yourselves, entertaining the seed as into depth of earth; and you will have the Holy Ghost within you, and (more than so) engaged for your preservation, and the perfecting of your salvation; when they that received the word as seed upon a rock, and never give it deep entertainment, will wither and fall away in the time of trial; and from them that have not saving grace, shall be taken away, even that which they seemed to have; Matt. xiii. 12. xxv. 19.

6. And lastly, Consider, If you fall short of a true conversion at the first, the devil will take occasion by it, to tempt you at last to utter despair. When you have made many essays and trials, and been about the work again and again, he will persuade you that there is no possibility of accomplishing it. If we convince an open profane person that is unconverted, he may easier see that yet there is hopes of it, but if a man have been half-converted, and lived long in a formal, self-deceiving profession of religion, and been taken by himself and others for a godly man, as it is very hard to convince this man that he is unconverted, so when he is convinced of it, he will easily fall into desperation. For satan will tell him, 'If thou be yet unconverted after so many confessions and prayers, and after so long a course of religion, what hope canst thou have that it should yet be done? Thou wilt never have better opportunities than thou hast had. If such sermons as thou hast heard could not do it, what hope is there of it? If such books, and such company, and such mercies and such afflictions have not done it, what hope canst thou have? Canst thou hear any livelier teaching than thou hast heard; or speak any holier words than thou hast spoken? If yet the work be quite undone, it is not forsaking another sin, nor going a step further that will do it; and therefore never think of it, for there is no hope: dost thou not know how oft thou hast tried in vain? and what

canst thou do more?' And thus you give advantage to the tempter by your first delays, and taking up in mere preparatories. And therefore I beseech you as you love your souls, take heed of resisting the Spirit of grace, and breaking off the work before it is thoroughly done, but go to the bottom, and follow it on, till it be accomplished in sincerity. And now hoping that upon these considerations you are resolved to do your best, I shall come to the thing which I principally intended; which is to give you certain Directions, which if you will obey, you may be converts and saints indeed.

Direct. I. Lest the work of conversion should miscarry where it seemeth to be begun, or in a hopeful way, I first advise you, 'To labour after a right understanding of the true nature of Christianity, and the meaning of the Gospel which is sent for to convert you.' You are naturally slaves to the prince of darkness; and live in a state of darkness, and do the works of darkness, and are hasting apace to utter darkness. And it is the light of saving knowledge that must recover you, or there is no recovery. God is the Father of Light, and dwelleth in light; Christ is the light of the world; his ministers also are the lights of the world, as under him; and are sent to turn men from darkness to light, by the Gospel which is the light to our feet: and this is to make us children of light, that we may no more do the works of darkness, but may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. 1 John i. 5. 9. James i. 17. Matt. v. 14. Acts xxvi. 18. John viii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 19. Eph. v. 8. 13. Col. i. 12. Believe it, darkness is not the way to the celestial glory. Ignorance is your disease, and knowledge must be your cure. I know the ignorant have many excuses, and are apt to think that the case is not so bad with them as we make it to be; and that there is no such need of knowledge, but a man may be saved without it. But this is because they want that knowledge that should shew them the misery of their ignorance and the worth of knowledge. Hath not the Scripture plainly told you, that "If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this world hath blinded, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; 2 Cor. iii. 4. I know that many that have much knowledge are ungodly; but what of that? Can any man therefore be godly or be saved, without know-

ledge? You may have a bad servant that yet is skilful enough in his work, but yet you will not mend the matter, by taking one that hath no skill at all. You may send a man on your errand that knows the way, and yet will not go it, but loiter and deceive you: but what of that, will you therefore think to mend the matter by sending one that knoweth not a step of the way, nor will learn it? Though a man of knowledge may be the servant of the devil, yet no man without knowledge (that hath the use of his reason) can be the servant of God. A man may go to hell with knowledge, but he certainly shall go to hell without it. I do not say that you must all be men of learning, and skilled in the arts and sciences, and languages: but you must have the knowledge of a Christian, though not of a scholar. Can you love or serve a God that you know not? Can you let go friends, and goods, and life, for a glory which you have no knowledge of? Can you make it the principal business of your lives to seek for a heaven whose excellencies you know not of? Can you lament your sin and misery, when you are unacquainted with it? Or will you strive against sin as the greatest evil, when you know not the evil of it? Will you believe in a Christ, whom you do not know, and trust your souls and all upon him? Will you rest upon a promise, or fear a threatening, or be ruled by a law, which you do not understand? It is not possible to be Christians without knowing the substance of Christianity: nor is it possible for you to be saved without knowing the way of salvation.

Labour, therefore, to be well acquainted with the grounds and reasons, and nature of your religion. The clearer your light is, the warmer and livelier your hearts will be. Illumination is the first part of sanctification. The head is the passage to the heart. O if you did but thoroughly know what sin is, and what a life it is to serve the flesh, and what the end of this will prove, with what detestation would you cast it away! If you did thoroughly know what a life of holiness is, how speedily would you choose it. If you did truly know what God is; how infinitely powerful and wise, and good; how holy, and just, and true; and what title he hath to you, and authority over you; and what an eternal portion he would be to you, how is it possible that you could prefer the dirt of the world before him, or delay any longer to return unto him? If you did but truly know what Christ

is, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what that pardon, and grace, and glory are which he hath purchased for you, and offereth to you, and how sure his promise is by which it is offered, it is not possible that you should refuse to entertain him, or delay to give up your souls unto him. Do you think a man that truly knows what heaven is, and what hell is, can still be in doubt whether he should turn or not? Alas ! sirs, if God would but open your eyes, to see where you are, and what you are doing, you would run as for your lives, and quickly change your minds and ways. You would no more stay in your carnal state, than you would stay in a house that were falling down on your heads, or in a ship that you perceived sinking under you, or on the sands when you see the tide coming towards you. If you did but see your chamber full of devils this night, you would not stand to ask whether you should be gone. And sure then if you knew how the devils are about you, how they deceive you, and rule you, and wait to drag you away to hell, you would never stay a night longer willingly in such a state. While men understand not what the Gospel means, nor what a minister saith to them, no wonder if they regard them not, but continue in their sin. If you see a bear or a mad dog making towards a man, and tell him of it, and call to him to be gone, if he be a man of another language, and do not understand you, he will make never the more haste ; but if he understand and believe you, he will away. If people think that ministers are in jest with them, or that they are uncertain of what they say, no marvel if they hear us in jest, or as men that believe not what they hear. But if you knew that your lives lay on it, yea, your everlasting life, would you not regard it, and look about you ? Now you stand deliberating and questioning the business whether you should turn, and let go sin, or no. But if you knew that you must certainly have hell with it, if you keep it, methinks your doubt should quickly be resolved, and you should be loath to give another night's lodging to so chargeable and dangerous a guest. Now when we persuade you to holiness of life, you will demur on it, as if there were some doubtfulness in the matter. But if you knew the nature and end of holiness, you would soon be out of doubt ; and if you knew but how much happier you might be with God, you would never stick at the parting with your most

delightful sins. As the Jews rejected Christ, and preferred a murderer before him, and cried out 'Crucify him,' and all because they did not know him (1 Cor. ii. 8. John viii. 9. i. 10. Acts xiii. 27.), so you let Christ knock and call, and offer you salvation, and you stand questioning whether you should obey his call, and whether you should not prefer your lusts before him; and all because you know him not, nor the grace and glory which he tendereth to you. When men understand not the reasons of God, that should prevail with them, no wonder if they part not with that which is as dear to them as their lives. But when once they know the reasons of Christianity, those moving, weighty, undeniable reasons, that are fetched from God, and heaven, and hell, they will then stand questioning the matter no longer; but they will resign up all, even life itself. All this I speak of a spiritual, powerful, and a practical knowledge, and not of every swimming opinion and conceit.

Study, therefore, what God is, and what he is to you, and what he would be to you. Study what sin is, and what the damnation is which it deserveth. Study what Christ is, and hath done and suffered for you, and what he is willing to do, if you neglect him not. Study what the world is, and what is the utmost that sin will do for you. Study what the everlasting glory is which you may have with God, if you lose it not by your folly. And study what faith is, and what repentance is, and what love and joy, and a holy and heavenly life are, and how little reason you have to be afraid of them. If this understanding have but deeply possessed you, it will bias your hearts, and make you resolved, settled converts.

Whereas, if you seem to turn and scarce know why, and seem to take up a Christian life before you are thoroughly possessed with the nature, grounds, and reasons of it, no marvel if you are quickly lost again in the dark, and if every caviller that you meet with can nonplus you, and make you stagger, and call in question all that you have done, and ravel all your work; or if you do but run from one party to another, and follow every one that tells you a fair tale, and never know what to fix upon, nor when you are in the way, and when you are out.

The apprehensions of the mind do move the whole man. Wisdom is the guide and stay of the soul. Sinning is doing

foolishly, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. And sinners are fools ; Prov. i. 22. Psal. lxxv. 4. Their mirth is but the mirth of fools, and their song the song of fools ; Eccl. vii. 4. 5. Yea, the best of their services, while they refuse to hear and obey, is but the sacrifice of fools ; Eccl. v. 1. And such are not fit for the house of God ; “for God hath no pleasure in fools ;” Eccl. v. 4. He hath need to have his wits about him, and know what he doth that will be the servant of the God of heaven, and escape the deceits of a subtle devil, and get to heaven through so many difficulties as are before him. Above all getting, therefore, get wisdom.

Direct. II. If you would not have the work of your conversion miscarry, when you understand what is offered you, then search the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things be so or not.

So did the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11. ; and the text saith, that, therefore, they believed. We come not to cheat and deceive you ; and, therefore, we desire not that you should take any thing from us, but what we can prove to you from the word of God to be certainly true. We desire not to lead you in the dark, but by the light to lead you out of darkness ; and, therefore, we refuse not to submit all our doctrine to an equal trial. Though we would not have you wrong your souls by an unjust distrust of us, yet would we not desire you to take these great and mighty things merely upon our words ; for then your faith will be in man ; and then no marvel if it be weak, and ineffectual, and quickly shaken. If you trust a man to-day, you may distrust him to-morrow ; and if one man be of greatest credit with you this year, perhaps another of a contrary mind may be of more credit with you the next year. And, therefore, we desire no further to be believed by you, than is necessary to lead you up to God, and to help you to understand that word which you must believe. Our desire, therefore, is, that you search the Scripture, and try whether the things that we tell you be the truth. The word will never work on you to purpose till you see and hear God in it, and perceive that it is he, and not man only, that speaks to you. When you hear none speaking to you but the minister, no marvel if you dare despise him ; for he is a frail and silly man like yourselves ; when you think that the doctrine which we preach to you is merely of our own

devising, and the conjecture of our own brain, no marvel if you set light by it, and will not let go all that you have, at the persuasion of a preacher. But when you have searched the Scripture, and find that it is the word of the God of heaven, dare you despise it then? When you there find that we said no more than we are commanded, and God that hath spoken this word will stand to it; then sure it will go nearer you, and you will consider of it, and make light of it no more. If we offered you bad wares, we should desire a dark shop; and if our gold were light or bad, we would not call for the balance and the touchstone. But when we are sure the things that we speak are true, we desire nothing more than trial. Beauty and comeliness hath no advantage of loathsome deformity, when they are both together in the dark, but the light will shew the difference. Error may be a loser by the light; and, therefore, shuns it; John iii. 19—21. But truth is a gainer by it, and therefore seeks it. Let Papists hide the Scriptures from the people, and forbid the reading of them in a tongue which they understand, and teach them to speak to God they know not what; we dare not do so, nor do we desire it. Our doctrine will not go off well in the dark; and, therefore, we call you to the law and to the testimony, and desire you to take our words into the light, and see whether they be according to the word of the Lord. Nothing troubleth us more than that we cannot persuade our hearers to this trial. Some of them are so hardened in their sin and misery, that they will not be at so much labour as to open their Bibles, and try whether we say true or not. Some of them will not trouble their minds with the thoughts of it. “God is not in all their thoughts;” Psal. x. 4. And some are already too wise to learn; and they will not so long abate their confidence of their former opinions; though, poor souls, their ignorance doth threaten their damnation. And some are so engaged in a sinful party, that their companions will not give them leave to make so much question of the way that they are in; and some will scarce take the Scripture for the rule by which they must try and be tried, but look more to custom, and the will of those in power over them. And most are unwilling to try, because they are unwilling to know the truth, and cannot endure to find themselves miserable, nor see the sin which they would not leave, nor

see the duty which they love not to practise. And thus we cannot get them to try whether the things that we teach them be so.

For want of this it is that men deceive themselves, and think their case to be safe when it is miserable, because they will not try it by the word. This makes them rage, and be confident in their folly (Prov. xiv. 16.), and laugh and sing at the brink of hell, and swim as merrily down the stream to the devouring gulf as if no evil were near them. This makes them in the depth of misery to have no pity on themselves, and to do so little to escape it; though they have time, and means, and help at hand, yet there are not hearts in them to make use of them; yea, they run themselves daily further on the score; and all because we cannot get them to search the Scripture, and try whether sin be so small a matter, and whether this will not be bitterness in the end. Hence it is that they are so easily drawn by a temptation; and that they dislike a holy life, and have base thoughts of them that are most diligent for salvation, and are most precious in the eyes of God; and that they can even deride the way that they should walk in (Prov. 1. 20. Psal. i. 2.), because they will not search the Scripture, to see what it saith to these matters. The word is a light, and would do much to open their eyes, and win them over to God, if they would but come to it with a desire to know the truth. You think that the ungodly that are rich and great, are in a better condition than a godly man that is poor and despised. And why is this, but because you will not go into the sanctuary, and see in what a slippery place they stand, and what will be the end of these men? Psal. lxxiii. 16, 17. 22. In a word, this is the undoing of millions of souls. They are all their lifetime out of the way to heaven, and yet will not be persuaded to ask the way; but they run on and wink, and put it to the venture. Many a thousand are gone out of the world, before they ever spent the quantity of one day in trying by the Scripture whether their state were good, and their way were right. Nay, let their teachers tell them that they must be sanctified and take another course, they will differ from their teachers though they be never so wise or learned; and they will contradict them, and not believe or regard them. And yet we cannot get them to come to us, and put the case to a trial, and let the Scripture be the judge. Would

they but do this, they could never sure have such hard thoughts of their teachers, and be offended at their plainest, closest dealing. You would then say, 'I see now the minister says not this of himself, he speaks but that which God commandeth him; and if he would not deliver the message of the Lord, he were unworthy and unfit to be his ambassador. He were cruel to me if he would not pull me out of the fire, by the plainest, closest means;' Jude 23. 'He hated me if he would not rebuke me, but suffer sin upon me;' Lev. xix. 17. 'If he would please men he should not be the servant of Christ;' Gal. i. 10. 'I know it is no pleasure to him to trouble me, or to provoke me; but it would be his own destruction if he tell me not of my danger,' Ezek. iii. 18. 'And I have no reason to wish him to damn his own soul, and suffer me to do the like by mine; and all for fear of displeasing me in my sin.' These would be your thoughts if you would but try our words by the Scripture, and see whether we speak not the mind of God.

And sure it would go somewhat deeper in your hearts, and it would stick by you, and be more before your eyes, when you once understood that it is the word of God.

This then is my request to you, sirs, that the work of your conversion may not miscarry, that you would carry all that you hear to the Scripture, and search there, and see whether it be so or not, that so you may be put out of doubt, and may be at a certainty, and not stand wavering; and that your faith may be resolved into the authority of God, and so the work may be divine, and consequently powerful and prevailing, when the ground and motive are divine. If you be not satisfied in the doctrine which the minister delivereth to you, first search the Scripture yourselves; and if that will not do, go to him, and desire him to shew you his grounds for it in the word of God, and join with you in prayer for a right understanding of it. Do you question whether there be so severe a judgment, and a heaven, and a hell, as ministers tell you? Search the Scripture, in Matt. xxv. and 2 i. 8—10. John v. 29. Matt. xiii. Do you question whether a man may not be saved without conversion, regeneration, and holiness? Open your Bibles, and see what God saith, John iii. 3. 6. Matt. xviii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. viii. 9. Heb. xii. 14. Do you think a man may be saved without knowledge? Let Scripture judge; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

John xvii. 3. Hos. iv. 6. Do you think a man may be saved that doth as the most do, and goeth in the common way of the world? Search the Scripture and see; Matt. vii. 13. xx. 16. xxii. 14. Luke xii. 32. Do you think an unhumiliated soul may be saved, that never was contrite and broken-hearted for sin? Try by Isa. lvii. 15. lxvi. 2. Psal. li. 17. Luke iv. 18. Matt. xi. 28. Do you think a man can be the servant of God, that liveth a fleshly life, and will keep his sin? Try by Rom. viii. 13. John iii. 12. Ephes. v. 5, 6. 1 John iii. 9, 10. Do you doubt whether it be necessary to make so much ado to be saved, and to be so strict, and make religion our chiefest business? Try by Psal. i. 1—3. 1 Pet. iv. 18. Heb. xii. 14. Luke x. 42. Luke xiii. 24. Eph. v. 15, 16. Do you think a man can be saved that is a worldling, whose heart is more on earth than heaven? Try by 1 John ii. 15. Phil. iii. 19. Col. iii. 1. Luke xiv. 26, 33. Do you doubt whether you should serve God with your families, and instruct them, and pray with them? Try by Jos. xxiv. 15. Deut. vi. 6, 7. Dan. vi. 10, 11. Exod. xx. 10.

Thus if you will in all these weighty matters but go to the Scriptures, and see whether it say as your teachers say, you might soon be resolved, and that by the surest authority in the world. If you think that your ministers may be deceived, I hope you will confess that God cannot be deceived. If you think that your ministers are passionate, or self-conceited, or speak out of ill-will to you, I hope you dare not say so by the Lord; he owes you no ill-will, nor speaks a word but what is most sure. If you think us partial, sure God is impartial. What better judge can you have now, than he that is infallible, and must judge you all at the last? If any Papist put it into your head to ask, ‘Who shall be judge of the sense of Scripture?’ I answer, Who shall be judge of the Judge of all the world? The law is made to judge you, and not to be judged by you. None can be the proper judges of the sense of a law but the maker of it; though others must judge their cases by the law. Your work is to discern it, and understand and obey it; and our work is to help you to understand it; but it is neither our work nor yours to be the proper, or absolute judges of it. At least where it speaks plain it needs no judge.

Come then to the word in meekness and humility, with a teachable frame of spirit, and a willingness to know the

truth, and a resolution to stand to it, and yield to what shall be revealed to you, and beg of God to shew you his will, and lead you into the truth; and you will find that he will be found of them that seek him.

Direct. III. If you would not have the work of your conversion miscarry, my next advice is this:

‘See that you be much in the serious consideration of the truths which you understand, betwixt God and you in secret.’

I have often spoken of this heretofore; but because I apprehend it to be a work of exceeding great concernment, I shall be longer on it again than on the rest.

The greatest matters in the world will not work much upon him that will not think of them. Consideration opens the ear that was stopped, and the heart that was shut up; it sets the powers of the soul at work, and awakeneth it from the sleep of incogitancy and security. The thoughts are the first actings of the soul, that set at work the rest. Thinking on the matters that must make us wise, and do the work of God on the heart, is that which lieth on us to do in order to our conversion. By Consideration a sinner makes use of the truth, which before lay by, and therefore could do nothing. By Consideration he taketh in the medicine to his soul, which before stood by, and could not work. By Consideration a man makes use of his reason, which before was laid asleep, and therefore could not do its work. When the master is from home, the scholars will be at play. When the coachman is asleep, the horses may miss the way, and possibly break his neck and their own. If the ploughman go his way, the oxen will stand still, or make but bad, unhandsome work. So when reason is laid asleep, and out of the way, what may not appetite do? and what may not the passions do? and what may not temptations do with the soul? A wise man, when he is asleep, hath as little use of his wisdom as a fool. A learned man when he is asleep can hardly dispute with an unlearned man that is awake. A strong man that is never so skilful at his weapons, is scarce able in his sleep to deal with the weakest child that is awake. Why all the powers of your soul are, as it were, asleep, till Consideration awake them, and set them on work. And what the better are you for being men, and having reason, if you have not the use of your reason when you need it? As

men are inconsiderate because they are wicked, so are they the more wicked because they are inconsiderate. The keenest sword, the greatest cannon, will do no execution against an enemy, while they lie by and are not used. There is a mighty power in the word of God, and the example of Christ, to pull down strong holds, and conquer the strongest lusts and corruptions. But they will not do this while they are forgotten and neglected. Will heaven entice the man that thinks not of it? Will hell deter the man that thinks not of it? Why is it that all the reasoning in the world will do no more good on a man that is deaf, than if you said nothing? but because the passage to his thoughts and understanding is stopt up. And if you have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not, and wilfully cast it out of your thoughts, what good can any thing do to you that is spoken? It is not holding your mouth that will nourish you, if you will not let it down: not taking it into your stomach, if you will not keep it, but presently cast it up again; but it must be kept till it be digested and distributed. So it is not the most excellent truths in the world that will change your hearts, if you let them not down to your hearts, and keep them not there by meditation, till they are digested and turned into spiritual life. The plaster must be laid upon the sore if you would be cured. The wound and sickness is at your heart; and if you will not take in the word to your heart, where the sickness is, I know not how you should expect a cure. The soul will not be charmed into holiness by the bare hearing or saying over a few good words; as wizards use to cure diseases, or seem to cure them. It must be truth at the heart that must change the heart. And if you will not think on it, and think on it again, how can you expect it should come at your hearts?

You say you would gladly have Christ and grace, and are ready to lay the blame on God, because he doth not give it you, and say, 'We cannot convert ourselves:' but would you have the Spirit come in, while you hold the door against him? He knocks, and desireth you to open and let him in, and you wish him to come in; but you bolt the door, and no entreaty will procure you to open it. It is Consideration of the saving doctrine of the Gospel that openeth the heart, and giveth it entertainment. Set yourselves therefore on purpose to this work, and open the doors of your heart which are now shut, and let the King of glory come in. Who will

believe that you love the light, when you shut the windows, and draw the curtains? If you will set yourselves to consider of the truth, the windows of your soul will be set open, and then the light will certainly come in. Now you read over whole chapters, and hear sermon after sermon, and either they never stir you, or at least it is but a little for a fit, like a man that hath a little warmed him at the fire in the winter, and when he goes from it, is colder than before: but if you would but set yourselves to consider of what you hear and read, one line of a chapter, or one sentence of a sermon would lay you in tears, or make you groan, or at least do more than now is done. Satan hath garrisoned the heart of every carnal man: and Consideration is the principal means to cast him out. If by considering of the terrible threatenings of the word, you would discharge these cannons of God against them, what a battery would it make in the corruptions of your souls! Our God is a consuming fire, and the fire of hell is threatened in his law, as the wages of sin: by serious Consideration you may as it were, fetch fire from God and from his word, and set fire to the very gates of satan's garrison, and fire him out of many of his holds.

But because this is so needful a point, I shall be so large upon it, as, I. To tell you some of those things that you should consider of. II. To tell you in what manner you should do it. And, III. To give you some motives to put you on.

I. The first thing that I would have you oft to think on, is, The nature of that God with whom ye have to do. Consider, that if he be the most wise, it is all the reason in the world that he should rule you. If he be good, and infinitely good, there is all the reason in the world that you should love him; and there is no shew of reason that you should love the world or sin before him. If he be faithful and true, his threatenings must be feared, and his promises must not be distrusted; and there is no reason that you should make any question of his word. If he be holy, then holiness must needs be most excellent, and those that are the holiest must needs be the best, because they are like to God; and then he must be an enemy to sin, and to all that are unholy, because they are contrary to his nature. Consider that he is almighty, and there is no resisting him, or standing out against him; in the twink of an eye can he snatch thy guilty soul from thy body, and cast it where sin is better known.

A word of his mouth can set all the world against thee, and set thine own conscience against thee too; a frown of his face can turn thee into hell; and if he be thine enemy, it is no matter who is thy friend; for all the world cannot save thee, if he do but condemn thee. They are blessed whom he blesseth, and they are cursed indeed whom he curseth. He was from eternity, and thou art but as it were of yesterday: thy being is from him; thy life is always in his hands, thou canst not live an hour without him, thou canst not fetch a breath without him, nor think a thought, nor speak a word, nor stir a foot or hand without him; thou mayst better live without bread, or drink, or fire, or air, or earth, or water, than without him. All the world is before him, but as the drop of a bucket, or a little sand or dust that should be laid in balance with all the earth. Hadst thou but compassed about this lower world, and seen all the nations of it, and its wonderful furniture, and seen the great deeps of the mighty ocean, and the abundance of creatures in them all: O what thoughts then wouldst thou have of God! But if thou hadst been above the stars, and seen the sun in all its glory, and seen the frame and course of those higher orbs, and seen the blessed, glorious angels, and all the inhabitants of the higher world, O then what thoughts of God wouldst thou entertain! O but if it were possible that thou hadst seen his glory, or seen but his back parts as Moses did, or seen him in Christ the now glorified Redeemer, what apprehensions wouldst thou have of him then! Then how wouldst thou abhor the name of sin, and how weary wouldst thou be of the pleasantest life that sensuality could afford thee! Then thou wouldst quickly know that no love can be great enough, and no praises can be high enough, and no service can be holy and good enough for such a God: then you would soon know, that this is not a God to be neglected, or dallied with; nor a God to be resisted, nor provoked by the wilful breaking of his laws. It is eternal life to know this God (John xvii. 3.), and for want of knowing him it is, that sin aboundeth in the world. This maketh holiness so scarce and lean: men worship they care not how, because they worship they know not whom. O therefore dwell on the meditations of the Almighty. So far as he doth possess thy mind, there will be no place for sin and vanity. One would think if I should set you no further task, and tell you of no

other matters for meditation, this one should be enough ; for this one is in a manner all. What will not the due knowledge of God do upon the soul ? That is the best Christian, and the most happy man that knoweth most of him ; and that is the most vile and miserable wretch that is furthest from him, and strangest to him ; it is the character of the fool of fools, to have an heart whose disposition and practice saith, “ There is no God ; ” Psalm xiv. 1. that is, to be so affected and employed in their hearts, as if there were no God, and when God is not in all his thoughts ; Psalm x. 4. It was better with man when he had less knowledge for himself, and fewer thoughts for himself, and more of God. And there is no way to restore us to sound understanding, and to perfect our knowledge, but to turn our eye upon God again ; for in knowing him, we know all that is worth the knowing. Take hold then of the blessed God in thy meditations, and fill thy thoughts with him, and dwell upon those thoughts. Remember he is always with thee, and wherever thou art, or whatever thou art doing, most certainly he seeth thee. As sure as thou art there, the Lord is there. He knows thy thoughts, he hears thy words, he sees all thy ways. And is such a God as this to be provoked or despised ? Were it not better to provoke and despise all the world ? Is his favour to be slighted ? Were it not better to lose the favour of all the world ? Consider of this !

2. Another thing that I would have you oft think of, is, What end you were made for, and what business it is that you came for into the world. You may well think that God made you not in vain ; and that he made you for no lower end, than for himself ; and that he would never have made you, nor so long preserved you, if he had not cared what you do. He would never have endued you with a reasonable and immortal soul, but for some high, and noble, and immortal end. Surely it was that you might be happy in knowing him, that he made you capable of knowing him ; for he made nothing in vain. It is useful for a horse to know his pasture, and provender, and work, and perhaps his master ; but he need not know whether there be a God ; and accordingly he is qualified. But it is sure man’s chief concernment to know that there is a God, and what he is, and how to serve him, and what he is and will be to us ; or else we should never have been capa-

ble of such things. And he would never have made you capable of loving him, but that you should be exercised and made happy in that love. The frame, and faculties, and capacity of your souls, and the scope of Scripture, do all declare, that you were sent into this world, to seek after God, and to love him, and obey him, and rejoice in him in your measure; and to prepare for a life of nearer communion, where you may enjoy him and praise him in the highest perfection. Consider with yourselves, whether a life of sin be that which you were made for; or whether God sent you hither to break his laws, and follow your own lusts. And whether the satisfying of your flesh, and the gathering a little worldly wealth, and the feathering of a nest which you must so quickly leave, be like to be the business that you were sent about into the world.

3. The next thing that I would have you consider of, is, How you have answered the ends of your creation, and how you have done the business that you came into the world to do. Look back upon the drift of your hearts and lives; read over the most ancient records of your consciences, and see what you have been, and what you have been doing in the world till now. Have you spent your days in seeking after God, and your estates and strength in faithful serving him? Have you lived all this time in the admiration of his excellencies, and the fervent love of him, and delightful remembrance of him, and the zealous worship of him? If you have done this, you had not need of a conversion. But consider, have you not forgotten what business you had in the world, and little minded the world that you should have prepared for, and lived as if you knew not him that made you, or why he made you? Was sport and merriment the end that you were created for? Was ease and idleness, or eating, or drinking, or vain discourses, or recreation, the business that you came into the world about? Was living to the flesh, and scraping up riches, or gaping after the esteem of men, the work that God sent you hither to do? Was this it that he preserved you for, and daily gave you in provision for? What, was it to forget him, and slight him, and turn him out of your hearts, and rob him of his service and honour; and to set up your flesh in his stead, and give that to it, that was due to him? Bethink you what you have done, and whether you have done the work that you were sent to do, or not.

4. The next thing you should use to consider of, is, How grievously you have sinned, and what a case it is that your sin hath brought you into. If you take but an impartial view of your lives, you may see how far you have missed your marks, and how far you have been from what you should have been ; and how little you have done of that which was your business. And O what abundance of aggravations have your sins ! which I shall pass over now, because I must mention them under another head. It is not only some actually out-breakings against the bent of your heart and life, but your very heart was false and gone from God, and set in you to do evil.

O the time that you have lost ; the means and helps that you have neglected ; the motions that you have resisted ; the swarms of evil thoughts that have filled your imaginations ; the streams of vain and idle words that have flowed from your mouth ; the works of darkness, in public and in secret, that God hath seen you in ! And all this while, how empty were you in inward holiness, and how barren of good works, to God or man ? What have you done with all your talents, and how little or nothing hath God had of all !

And now consider what a case you are in, while you remain unconverted. You have made yourselves the sinks of sin, the slaves of satan, and the flesh ; and are skilful in nothing but doing evil ; if you be called to prayer or holy meditation, your hearts are against it, and you are not used to it, and therefore you know not how to do it to any purpose : but to think the thoughts of lust, or covetousness, or hatred, or malice, or revenge, this you can do without any toil. To speak of the world, or of your sports and pleasures, or against those that you bear ill will to, this you can do without any study. You are such as are spoken of, Jer. iv. 22. " My people is foolish, they have not known me : they are sottish children, and they have no understanding : they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." You are grown strangers to the God that made you, in whose love and service you should live and find your chief delights. Your hearts are hardened, and you are dead in your sins : the guilt of the sins of your lives are still upon you : you can neither look into your hearts and lives, no, not on one day of your lives, or the best hour that you have spent, but you must see the ugly face of sin, which deserveth condem-

nation. You have made God your enemy, that should have been your only felicity: and yet you are always at his mercy, and in his hands. Little do you know how long his patience will yet endure to you; or what hour he will call away your souls: and if death come, alas, what a case will it find you in! How lamentably unready are you to meet him! How unready to appear before the dreadful God whom you have offended! and what a terrible appearance do you think that will be to you! Most certainly if you die before you are converted, you will not be from among the devils and damned souls an hour. The law hath cursed you already, and the execution will be answerable, if you die in your sins. And thus you may see the gain of sin, and what it is that you have been doing all this while for your own souls; and what a case it is that you have brought yourselves into; and what need you have speedily to look about you.

5. The next step of your Consideration should be this; Bethink yourselves what a blessed condition you might be in, if by conversion you were but recovered from this misery, and brought home to God. This moved the heart of the prodigal son to return; Luke xv. 16, 17. "When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" He that hath not husks to feed on with the swine, considered the plenty that he had forsaken at home. The poorest member of the household of Christ, is in a better condition than the greatest king on earth, that is unconverted. You might have lived another kind of life than you have done, for safety, and benefit, and true content, if you would have turned your minds and life to God. Were you but converted, you would be the living members of Christ, and his precious benefits would be yours; his blood would cleanse you from all your sins, and they would be all freely forgiven you; God would be reconciled to you, and become your friend, yea, your Father and your God; and will take you for his household servants, and adopted children: the Holy Ghost would dwell in you, and guide your understandings, and shew you that which flesh and blood cannot reveal, and bring you into acquaintance with the mysteries of God: he will be a Spirit of light and life within you, and work your hearts yet more to God, and give you yet stronger inclinations and affections to the things above. He will

help you when you are weak, and quicken you where you are dull, and be your remembrancer when you are forgetful of necessary things : he will help you in prayer, both for matter and for manner, and help you in meditation and conference, and other duties : he will warn you of your danger, and strengthen you against temptations, and cause you to overcome ; and if you fall, he will cause you to rise again : he will be an indwelling comforter to you, and so effectually speak peace to you in the midst of your disquietness, that by speaking it, he will create it in you : and in the multitude of your thoughts within you, his comforts will delight your souls. O what a life might you live, if Christ by his Spirit did once live in you ! You may easily conjecture how tender Christ would be of his own members, how dearly he would love them, how constantly he would watch over them, how plentifully he would provide for them, and how safely he would preserve them. And if you should come into a rougher way, he would lead you out : afflictions should never be laid on you but for your good ; and continue no longer than your need continueth them, and be taken off at last to your satisfaction and contentment. Indeed your life would be a life of mercies ; and that which is but a common mercy to common men would be a special mercy to you, as coming from your Father's love, and furthering your salvation, and hinting out to you your everlasting mercies. You could not open your eyes, but you would see that which may encourage and comfort you ; all the works of God which you behold, would shew you his majesty, his love, and power, and lead you to himself. You could not open your Bible, but you would find in it the blessed lines of love : O what good it would do you, to read there the blessed attributes of your God ! to look upon his name ! to peruse the description of his most perfect nature ! What good would it do you to read of the nature, and incarnation, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and intercession, and return of your blessed Redeemer ? What good would it do you to find those holy rules which your new nature is agreeable to, and to read over the law that is written in your hearts, and read the curse from which you are delivered ? What life and joy would your souls receive from the many, and full, and free promises of grace ! Were you once but truly sanctified and made new, your condition would be

often comfortable, but always safe ; and when you were in the greatest fears and perplexities, you would still be fast in the arms of Christ : and what a life would that be, to have daily access to God in prayer ; to have leave in all your wants and danger, to seek to him with a promise of hearing and success ; that you may be sure of much more from him, than a child can from the tenderest father, or a wife from the most loving husband upon the earth. What a life would it be, when you may always think on God as your felicity, and fetch your highest delights from him, from whom the ungodly have their greatest terrors ? And it is no contemptible part of your benefits that you may live among his people, and in their special love, and have a special communion with them, and interest in their prayers, and may possess among them the privileges of the saints and the ordinances of God : that instead of idle talk, and the unprofitable fellowship of the children and works of darkness, you may join with the church of God in his praises, and feed with them at his table, on the body and blood of Christ, and then have conveyances of renewed grace and a renewed pardon sealed to your souls ; but how long should I stay, if I should tell you but one half of the blessing of a sanctified and spiritual state ? In a word, God would be yours, Christ would be yours, the Holy Ghost would be yours, all things would be yours ; the whole world would have some relation to your welfare ; devils would be subdued to you, and cast out of your souls ; sin would be both pardoned and overcome ; angels would be ministering spirits unto you for your good ; the promises of Scripture would be yours ; and everlasting glory would at last be yours ; and while you staid on earth, you might comfort yourselves as oft as you would, with the believing foresight of that inconceivable, unspeakable, endless felicity.

O sirs, what a treasure have I here expressed in a few words ! What hearts would you have if you were but possessed, lively and sensible of all that is contained in this leaf or two ! You would not envy the greatest prince on earth his glory, nor change states with any man that was a stranger to these things. Did you but use to consider of the state of the saints ; how could you keep off, and stay with sin, and make so many delays in turning unto God ! Sure this consideration might turn the scales.

6. The next part of your meditation should be, Of the gracious and wonderful work of our redemption, and the means and remedies which are provided for your souls, and the terms on which salvation may be obtained.

For all the sins that you have committed, you are not given over to despair; the Lord hath not left you without a remedy: your conversion and salvation is not a thing impossible. Nay, so much is done by Christ already, that it is brought upon reasonable terms even to your hands. A new and living way is consecrated for us by Christ through the veil of his flesh, and by his blood we may have boldness to enter into the holiest; Heb. x. 19, 20. He hath borne your burden; and offereth you instead of it his burden, which is light; Matt. xi. 28. He hath removed the impossibility and nailed to his cross the hand writing that was against you; Col. ii. 14, 15. And instead of it offereth you his easy yoke. He hath spoiled the principalities and powers that had captivated you, and openly triumphed over them on the cross. You are not left under the care of making satisfaction to God for your own sins; but only of accepting the Redeemer that hath satisfied. This much I dare confidently say to you all, without extending his benefits too far. It would be for want of faith in you, and not for want of satisfaction by the Redeemer, if any of you perish. And how free are his offers! How full are his promises! You are conditionally all pardoned and justified already, as is legible under the hand of God. And the condition which is imposed on you is not some meritorious or mercenary work, but the accepting of the benefit freely given, according to its nature, use, and ends. This is the faith by which you must be justified. These are the terms on which you may be saved. And which is more, the Lord hath provided means, even excellent, and plentiful, and powerful means, for the furthering of your souls in the performance of this condition, and helping you to believe, and repent, that you may live: and if the Spirit make not these means effectual, and adjoin not his special grace, and after this you remain unconverted, it will not be long of him, but of yourselves. So that you may perceive how hopeful a case you are yet in, by the blood of your Redeemer. If you destroy not your own hopes, and make not your case desperate by wilful impenitency, and refusal of free grace, how fair are you yet for heaven! and

what happy advantages have you for salvation ! It is brought even to your doors ; it is thrust as it were into your hands ; the Redeemer hath done so much for you all, as to bring your salvation to the choice of your own wills ; and if you be his chosen ones, he will also make you willing. You have precepts to believe, you are threatened if you will not believe ; you have promise upon promise, and Christ himself offereth you pardon, and life, and salvation with him, if you are but truly and heartily willing. You have God himself condescending to beseech you to accept them ; and ambassadors entreating you in his name and stead ; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. You have ordinances fitted to your necessities ; both reading, and preaching, and sacraments, and prayer. You have store of plain and powerful books ; you have the godly about you, most desirous to assist you, that would be glad to see or hear of your conversion ; you have the sight of the wicked, that are wallowing in their own dung, and the dirt of the world, to make you hate such beastly ways. You have reason and conscience within you to consider of these matters, and set them home, and apply them to yourselves ; you have time and strength to do all this, if you will not abuse it, and provoke God to take it from you for your negligence. You have mercies of many sorts, outward and inward, to win upon you, and encourage you in the work. And sometimes afflictions to remember you, and awaken you, and spur you on ; the devil and all your enemies are so far disabled, that they cannot destroy you against your wills, nor keep you from Christ, but by your own consents. The angels in heaven are ready to help you, and would even rejoice at your conversion. This is your case, and these are your helps, and encouragements, you are not shut up under desperation. God never told you, ‘ It is in vain to think of conversion ; it is too late : ’ if any have told you so, it was the devil, and not God ; and one would think that such considerations as these should drive the nail to the head, and be effectual to move you to resolve and turn.

7. The last thing that I would set before you to be considered, is, What is like to be the end of it, if after all this you should die unconverted.

O sirs, your hearts are not able now to conceive of it, nor the tongue of any mortal man to utter it. But so much of it we can certainly utter, as one would think should make

your hearts to tremble. You have seen, it may be, a dying man, in what pangs and agonies he parteth with his soul: and you have seen, it is like, the corps that was left there behind, and seen it laid in the common earth. But you see not what became of the soul, nor what an appearance it made in another world, nor what company did attend it, nor what a place or state it passed into. O sirs, when the hour is at hand that this must be your own case, it will awaken you to other kind of affections, than you have or can have at the reading of these words. It is wonderful that a little distance should make us so insensible of that change which we are all certain will come to pass; and yet through the folly and deadness of our hearts it is so; but they are other kind of thoughts of these weighty matters, which we shall have the next hour after death, than the most lively affections beforehand can afford us.

The misery was great that the Redeemer did find you in, and which you deserved by your sin against the law of the Creator. But if you be found unconverted at last, your punishment will be much sorer, and your case far worse than it was before. The Redeemer's law or Gospel hath its peculiar threatening, which differeth from the law of the mere Creator in several respects; even (1.) In the nature of the punishment, which will be torments of conscience for the neglect of a Redeemer, and recovering grace, which you should never have felt if you had never been redeemed. (2.) And in the degree of the punishment, which will be far sorer; Heb. x. 29. And (3.) In the remedilessness of it, the sentence being irreversible and peremptory. The first law indeed provided no remedy, but did not exclude remedy, nor make it impossible; but the law of Christ doth positively and expressly exclude all remedy, and leave the soul that goeth unconverted out of the body, to utter desperation, and misery without help or hope of the end. But I shall not stand now to describe to you the terrors of judgment or of hell, because I have done it already in other books, which I desire you to fetch the rest of this meditation from; that is, my "Treatise of Judgment," and the beginning of my third part of my "Book of Rest."

11. Having told you what should be the matter of your Consideration, I shall next tell you (but briefly) in what manner you should perform it. And here I shall not stand

to prescribe you any long or exact method for meditation, both because it agreeth not with my present resolved brevity, and because the persons that I now deal with, are not capable of observing such rules ; and if any desire such helps, they may transfer the directions which are given on another subject in my " Book of Rest," to the subject now in hand.

1. Do not stay till such thoughts will come of themselves into your minds, but set yourselves purposely to consider of these matters. Take some time to call your souls to an account concerning their present state, and their preparations for eternity. If a heathen Seneca could call himself every night to an account for the evil committed, and the good omitted in the day past, as he professeth that he ordinarily did ; why may not even an unconverted man that hath the helps which are now among us, bethink himself of the state of his soul ? But I know that a carnal heart is exceeding backward to serious consideration, and is loath to be troubled with such thoughts as these ; and the devil will do what he can to hinder it, by himself and others ; but yet if men would but do what they may do, it might be better with them than it is. Will you but now and then purposely withdraw yourselves from company into some secret place, and there set the Lord before your eyes, and call your souls to a strict account about the matters that I have mentioned even now, and make it your business to exercise your reason upon them ; and as you purposely go to church to hear, so purposely set yourselves to this duty of Consideration as a necessary thing ?

2. When you are upon it, labour to awaken your souls, and to be very serious in all your thoughts ; and do not think of the matters of salvation, as you would do of an ordinary trivial business, which you do not much regard or care how it goes. But remember that your life lieth on it, even your everlasting life ; and therefore call up the most earnest of your thoughts, and rouse up all the powers of your souls, and suffer them not to draw back, but command them to the work ; and then set the seven points that I mentioned even now before you ; and as you think of them, labour to be affected with them, in some measure according to their exceeding weight. As Moses said to Israel ; Deut. xxxii. 46. " Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day ; which you shall command your children to do,"

&c. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life. And as Christ said, Luke ix. 44. "Let these sayings sink into your ears;" so I say to you, let the matters which you think of go to your hearts, and sink down to the quick of your affections.

And if your hearts would slip away from the work, and other thoughts would creep into your mind, and you are weary of these considerations before they have done their work, see that you give not way to this laziness, or unwillingness, but remember it is a work that must be done, and therefore hold your thoughts upon it, till your hearts are stirred and warmed within you.

And if after all, you cannot awake them to seriousness and sensibility, put two or three such awakening questions as these to yourselves.

1. *Quest.* What if it were but the case of my body, or state, or name, should I not earnestly consider of it? If one do but wrong me, how easily can I think of it, and how tenderly do I feel it, and can scarce forget it. If my good name be blemished, and I be but disgraced, I can think of it night and day. If I lose but a beast, or have any cross in the world, or decay in my estate, I can think of it with sensibility. If I lose a child or a friend, I can feel it as well as think on it. If my health be decayed, and my life in danger, I am in good earnest in thinking of this. And should I not be as serious in the matters of everlasting life? Should I not think of it, and, soberly and earnestly think on it, when body and soul do lie at the stake, and when it concerneth my everlasting joy or torment?

2. *Quest.* What if I had but heard the Son of God himself calling on me to repent, and be converted, and seconding his commands with that earnest expression, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" would it not have brought me to some serious thoughts of my state? Why this he hath done in his word, and doth it by his ambassadors, and why then should I not consider it?

3. *Quest.* If I did but know that death were at my back, and ready to arrest me, and that I should be in another world before this day sevensnight, I should then begin to bethink me in good sadness: and why do I not so now, when I have no hold of my life an hour, and when I am sure that shortly that time will come?

4. *Quest.* If my eyes were but open to see that which I pretend to believe, and which is certainly true; even to see a glimpse of the majesty of the Lord, to see the saints in joy and glory, to see the damned souls in misery; and if I heard their lamentations; would not this even force my heart to Consideration? O then how earnestly should I think of these things? And why should I not do so now, when they are as sure as if I saw them, and when I must see them ere it be long?

Many more such awakening questions are at hand, but I give you but these brief touches on the things that are most common and obvious, that the most ignorant may be able to make some use of them. With such thoughts as these, you must bring on your backward hearts, and shake them out of their insensibility, and awaken them to the work.

III. When you have brought your hearts to be serious, be sure that you drive on your considerations to a resolution. Break not off in the middle, or before you bring the matter to an issue; but let all be done in order to practice. When you have been thinking of the excellencies of God and the world to come, and comparing them with all the delights on earth; put the question then to your hearts, and say, 'What sayst thou now, O my soul, which of these is the better for thee, which is the more desirable, and which of them shouldst thou prefer? Resolve then, and make thy choice according to the light and conviction which thou hast received.' When you are thinking of the reasons that should move you to be converted, ask yourselves, Whether these reasons be not clear, and what you have to say against them; and whether any thing that can be said to the contrary, can prove it better for you to be as you are, and to remain unconverted. Ask yourselves, 'Is my judgment resolved, or is it not? And if it be, (as sure it must be, if you be not beside yourselves) then write it down under your hands, or at least in your hearts, 'I do here confess before the Lord, that his commands are just, his motions are reasonable, his offers are exceeding merciful: I am satisfied that it is best for me to turn to him speedily, and with all my heart: I confess before him that I have no reason to the contrary, that deserves to be owned and called reason: this is my own judgment; of this I am convinced: if I turn not after this, the light that is in me, and the judgment that now

I possess, must needs be a witness against my soul.' If you would but thus drive on the case to a resolution of your judgments, you would have a great advantage for the resolving of your wills, which is the next thing that you must proceed to: and therefore next ask yourselves, 'Why should I not now resolve, and fixedly resolve to turn without any more delay? Is not the case plain before me? What reason have I to stand questioning the matter any longer, and to be unwilling to be happy? Shall I provoke God by dallying with him, and hazard my soul by lingering out my time in such a miserable state? No, by the grace of God I will return; even this hour, without any more delay.' Thus drive on all your considerations to resolution. (But of this I have more to say anon.)

By this time you may see of what necessity this duty of Consideration is, and how it must be performed, that it may further your conversion: but because it is a matter of so great necessity, I am loath to leave it thus, till I have done what I can to persuade you to the practice of it. To which end I entreat you to think of these following motives.

1. Consideration is a duty that you may perform if you will. You cannot say that is wholly out of your power; so that you are left inexcusable, if you will not be persuaded to it. You say you cannot convert yourselves; but cannot you set yourselves to consider of your ways, and bethink you of those truths that must be the instruments of your conversion? Your thoughts are partly at the command of your will: you can turn them up and down from one thing to another. Even an unsanctified minister, that hath no saving relish of spiritual things, can think of them, and spend most of his time in thinking of them, that he may preach them to others: and why cannot you then turn your thoughts to them for yourselves? You can think of house, and land, and friends, and trading, and of any thing that aileth you, or any thing that you want, or any thing that you love or think would do you good: and why cannot you think of your sin, and danger, of God, and of his word and works, of the state of your souls, and of everlasting life? Are you not able to go sometimes by yourselves, and consider of these matters? Are you not able when you are alone in your beds, or as you travel in the way, or at your labour, to bethink how things

stand with your souls? Why are you not able, what is it that could hinder you, if you were but willing?

2. Yea further, Consideration is so cheap a remedy, that if you will not use this, you despise your souls: yea, and you despise the Lord himself, and the everlasting things which you are called to consider of. A man that is in danger of losing his estate, or health, or life, and will not so much as bethink him of a remedy, doth sure set light by them, and lose them by his contempt. A man that hath had but his house on fire, and would not so much as think how to quench it, doth deserve that it should be burnt. If your parents, or children, or friends were in distress, if you would not so much as think of them, it were a sign you did not set much by them. Why, sirs, are not your souls worth the thinking on? Is not God, is not your Redeemer, worth the thinking on? And yet you will hypocritically pretend that you love God above all, when you will not so much as seriously think of him; how can you shew greater contempt of any thing, than to cast it out of your minds as unworthy to be thought on? And how can you more plainly shew that you despise God and heaven, than by such a course as this? If it be not worth the thinking on, it is worth nothing.

3. Consider that God doth not set so light by your salvation. He thought it worth a great deal more: must Christ think it worth his bloody sufferings, and with such a life of labour and sorrow, and will not you judge it worth your serious considerations? If he had not thought on it, and thought again, how miserable should we have remained! Ministers also must think on it, and study how to save your souls. And should you not study how to save your own? Must another man make it the business of his life to think how to do you good, that you may be saved, and are you not as much bound to do good to yourselves? Yea, all that fear God about you, are bound to study to do you good; and should you not bethink you then of the things that concern your own good?

4. Moreover, what have you your reason for, but to consider; and wherein do you differ from the beasts, so much as in your reason? If you have reason, and will not use it, you brutify yourselves; you live like madmen; for what is madness, but a loss of the use of reason? And do you think it a small thing to deface so noble a creature as man, and to

turn yourselves into beasts and madmen? Do you think that God will not call you to account for your reason, how you have used it? Doubtless he gave it you for a higher employment, than to enable you to plough, and sow, and follow your trades, and provide for your flesh. If this were all that a man did exceed a beast in, what a silly, wretched wight were man? Yea, so much more miserable than beasts, as his knowledge begets more care, and sorrow, and fear, than theirs. What matter is it for having reason at all, if it be not that we may use it for the matters of God, and eternal life?

5. Moreover, your soul is an active principle, which will be working one way or other; your thoughts will be going on one thing or other; and therefore the bare consideration is no great labour to you. And if you must lay out your thoughts on something, is it not better lay them out on these things, than on any other? Have you any better matters to think on than these? Have you any greater matters, or matters of greater necessity to think of? You cannot sure imagine it; at least you will not say so for shame. This makes your inconsiderateness an inexcusable sin. If thinking were toil to you, it were another matter. But when you must think of something, why not of God, and your eternal state, and the way to heaven, as well as of other matters? Will you rather throw away your thoughts, than God shall have them? If a man command his servant that is lame, to go on his business, the refuser hath a good excuse: 'I cannot go, or not without a great pain and danger;' but if he have a son or a servant that is so wanton that he cannot stand on his legs, but spends his time in running up and down, and dancing, and leaping, this person hath no excuse, if he will refuse to go on his master's or his father's errand; but will gad about on his pleasure all day, and will not go a few steps when he is bidden; especially if it were for his own life or welfare. So when you have thoughts that will not be kept idle, but will be gadding abroad through the world, and yet you will not think of God, and the matters of your peace, what wilfulness is this? If you should ask one that hath it not, for meat, or drink, or money, they might well deny you. But if you ask these, of one that hath abundance, and knows not what to do with them, but would throw them down the channel, rather than you should have them, what

would you think of such an one? Especially if it were your servant or your child that owed you much more? Thus do you by God and your own souls. You have thoughts enough and to spare, you know not what to do with them; and yet rather than you will spend one hour in a day or a week in serious thoughts of the state of your souls and the life to come, you will cast them away upon news, and tales, and other folk's business that do not concern you; yea, you will cast them down the sink of covetousness, and malice, and lust, and wantonness, and make them servants to the devil and the flesh. If you have a brook running by your land, you will endeavour to turn it over your ground, that seeing it must run, it may as well run that way where it may do good, as run in vain: so when your thoughts must run, is it not better that you turn them to your own hearts, and states, to prepare for the world that you are ready to step into, than to let them run in vain? If you see a man go in to a wine-cellar (though it be his own) and pull out all the spigots, and let all the wine run about the cellar, and suffer nobody to catch it, or be the better for it, what would you conceive of the wisdom or charity of that man? Your thoughts are a thing more precious than wine, and such a thing as should not be spilt; and yet is not this your every day's practice? You are before him that knows your thoughts: deny it if you can. What hour of the day can a man come to you and find your thoughts altogether idle? What minute of an hour can a man come and ask you what are you now thinking on, and you can truly say, Nothing? I know as long as you are awake, you are always thinking of somewhat (and perhaps when you are asleep) and what is it on? This body shall have a thought, and that body a thought; every word you hear, and every wrong that is done you, and almost every thing you look upon, shall have a thought; and God and your own salvation shall have none; that is, you will lose them, and let them run in waste; but you will do no good with them, nor take in any profit by them to yourselves.

6. Have you any thing that better deserves your consideration, than God and your salvation? Certainly God hath more right to your thoughts than any thing else that you can place them on. Your flesh, your friends, your worldly business are neither so honourable, so necessary, or so pro-

fitable subjects, as God and heaven are. As there is more profit to be got by the tillage of fruitful land, than barren heath; or by digging in a mine of gold, than in a clay-pit; so is there more pleasure and profit to be gotten in one hour's serious thoughts of your salvation, than in thinking all your lifetime of the world.

7. At least, methinks you should consider, how disproportionably and unequally you lay out your thoughts. Cannot you spare God the tenth; no, nor the hundredth part of them? Look back upon your lives, and trace your thoughts from day to day, and tell me how many hours in a week, in a month, in a year, you have spent in serious thoughts of the state of your souls, and of the life to come? Is it one hour of a hundred, of a thousand, of ten thousand, with some of you that is thus spent? Nay, I have very great cause to fear that there are some, yea, that there are many, yea, that there is far the greatest number, that never spent one hour since they were born, in withdrawing themselves purposely from all other business, and soberly and in good sadness bethinking themselves what case they are in, what evidence they have of their salvation, or how they must be justified at the bar of God; no, nor what business they have in the world, and to what end they were made, and how they have done the work that they were made for. Ah! sirs, doth conscience justify you in this? Or rather will it not torment you one day to remember it? What! did thy land, and livings, worldly matters deserve all thy thoughts, and did not the saving of thy soul deserve some of them? Did thy lusts, and sports, and wantonness deserve all? and did not God deserve some of them? Was it not worth now and then an hour's time, no, nor one hour's study in all thy life, to bethink thee in good sadness how to make sure of a life of endless joy or glory, and how to escape the flames of hell? This is not an equal distribution of thy thoughts, as thou wilt confess at last in the horror of thy soul.

8. It is the end of your present time and warnings, that you may consider and prepare for your everlasting state. What have you to do on earth but to consider how to get well to heaven? O that you did but know what a mercy it is, before you enter upon an endless life, to have but time to bethink you of it, and to make your election sure! If you were to be called away suddenly, this night, and the angel of

the Lord should say to any of you, 'Prepare, for within this hour thou must die, and appear before the living God : ' then would you not cry out, 'O, not so suddenly Lord ! Let me have a little more time to consider of my condition : let me have one month longer, to bethink me of the case of my soul, and make sure that I am justified from the guilt of my sins. Let me have one day more at least to prepare for my everlasting state ; for alas, I am yet unready.' Would not these be your cries, if God should call you presently away ? And yet now you have time, you will not consider of these matters and prepare.

9. Moreover, is it not time for you to consider your ways, when God doth consider them ? If he would forget them, or did not regard them, you might regard them the less yourselves : but be sure of it, he doth observe them, whether you do or not ; and he remembereth them though you forget them. Dost thou not know that all the sins of thy life are still on record before the Lord ? Saith Job, "Thou numberest my steps ; dost thou not watch over my sin ? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sowest up mine iniquity ;" Job xiv. 16, 17. Do you think that God forgets your sins, as you forget them ? Saith the Lord by the prophet Hosea, "They consider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness ; now their doings have beset them about, they are before my face ;" Hosea vii. 2. But you will say, What if God do consider our ways ? why surely then it is not for nothing, but evil is near if not prevented. As the Lord saith in Deut. xxxii. 34, 35. "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures ? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence ; their foot shall slide in due time. For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." If God be registering up thy sins, thou hast cause to tremble, to think what that portends : "for in this hardness and impenitency of thy heart, thou art treasuring up wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ; Rom. ii. 5. As grace is the seed of glory, so sin is the seed of shame, and trouble, and everlasting torment ; and though it may seem long before the harvest, you will taste the bitter fruit at last ; and whatsoever you have sowed, that shall you reap.

10. Moreover, if any thing ailed you, you look that God

should presently consider you: or if you want any thing, you think he should consider your wants: and yet will you not consider of him, and of your own wants? When you are in trouble, you cry to God, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, consider my trouble;" Psal. ix. 33. "Consider and hear me, O God;" Psal. xiii. 3. When you lie in pain and sickness, you will then cry to God, "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me;" Psal. cxix. 153. If you be oppressed or abused, you will groan as the Israelites under their taskmasters, and perhaps cry to God, as the captive people, Lam. i. 11. "See O Lord, consider; for I am become vile: remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider, and behold our reproach; chap. v. 1. ii. 20. And must God consider of you, that will not consider of him, or your own souls? Or may you not rather expect that dreadful answer, which he gives to such regardless sinners; Prov. i. 24—30. And hear your cries, as you hear his counsel; and think of you, as you thought of him.

Nay, more than so; even while you forget him, the Lord doth daily consider you, and supply your wants, and save you from dangers; and should you then cast him out of your thoughts? If he did not think of you, you would quickly feel it to your cost and sorrow.

11. Moreover, the nature of the matter is such, as one would think should force a reasonable creature to consider of it, and often and earnestly to consider. When all these things concur in the matter, he must be a block or a madman that will not consider, (1.) When they are the most excellent, or the greatest things in all the world. (2.) When they are our own matters, or nearly concern us. (3.) When they are the most necessary, and profitable, and delightful things. And (4.) When there is much difficulty in getting them, and danger of losing them. And all these go together in the matter of your salvation.

(1.) If you will not think of God and your souls, of heaven and hell, what then will you think of? All other things in the world are but toys and jesting matters to these. Crowns and kingdoms, lands and lordships are but chaff, and baubles, dirt and dung, to these everlasting things. The acts of renowned kings and conquerors, are but as puppet-plays in comparison of the working out of your salvation. And yet will you not be drawn to the consideration

of such astonishing things as these? One would think that the exceeding greatness of the matter should force you to consider it whether you will or no. When smaller objects affect not the senses, yet greater will even force their way. He that hath so hard a skin that he cannot feel a feather, methinks should feel the weight of a millstone: and if he feel not the prick of a pin, methinks he should feel a dagger. He that cannot hear one whisper, methinks should hear a cannon, or a clap of thunder, if he have any such thing as hearing left him. He hath bad eyes that cannot see the sun. One would think so glorious an object as God, should so entice the eyes of men that they should not look off him. One would think that such matters as heaven and hell should follow thy thoughts which way soever thou goest, so that thou shouldst not be able to look besides them, or to think almost of any thing else, unless with great neglect and disesteem. O what a thing is a stony heart, that can forget not only the God that he liveth by, but also the place where he must live for ever? Yea, that will not be persuaded to the sober consideration of it for an hour.

(2.) And as these are the greatest matters, so they are your own matters, and therefore one would think you should not need so much ado to bring you to consider them. If it were only other men's matters, I should not wonder at it. But self-love should make you regard your own. In outward matters, all seek their own things; Phil. ii. 21. And have they not more reason to seek their own salvation? It is your own souls, your own danger, your own sin, your own duty, that I persuade you to consider of. It is that God, that Christ, that would be your own; it is that heaven, that blessedness, that may be your own, if you lose it not by neglect; it is that hell, that torment, that will certainly be your own, if you prevent it not. And should not this be thought on? You will think of your own goods, or lands, or riches; of your own families, your own business, your own lives, and why not also of your own salvation?

(3.) Especially, when it is not only your own, but it is the "one thing needful;" Luke x. 42. It is that which your life or death, your everlasting joy or torment lieth on; and therefore must be considered of, or you are utterly undone forever. Necessity lieth upon you; and woe be to you, if you consider not of these things. It is not so necessary

that you eat, or drink, or sleep, or live, as it is necessary that you make sure your everlasting life. And the profit also doth answer the necessity. Buy but this one pearl, and you will be infinite gainers, though you sell all that you have in the world to buy it; Matt. xiii. 44—46. Get God, and get all: make sure of heaven, and then fear no loss, nor want, nor sorrow. If you count not all the world as dung for the winning of Christ, that you may be found in him, possessed of his righteousness, it is because you know neither the world nor Christ; Phil. iii. 7—9. Yea, the delight will also answer the commodity; for “in the presence of God is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore; Psal. xvi. 11. And the forethoughts of them may well make “glad our hearts, and cause our glory to rejoice;” Psal. xvi. 8, 9. “For goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;” Psal. xxiii. 6. “He shall guide us with his counsel, and afterward receive us into glory;” Psal. lxxiii. 24. And lest yet you should suspect any lack of comfort, he tells you, you shall “enter into the joy of your Lord;” Matt. xxv. 23. “And that you shall be with him where he is, to behold his glory;” John xvii. 24.

(4.) And yet if all this might be had with a wet finger; if heaven were the portion of worldlings, and sluggards, that trouble not their thoughts much about it, then you might have some excuse for your inconsiderateness. But it is not so; there are difficulties in your way, and they are many and great. What a dark understanding have you to inform? What a dull and backward nature to spur on! What an unreasonable appetite! What raging passions! What violent, rebellious senses to contend with, to master, and to rule! Abundance of adversaries on every hand: a subtle devil, and as malicious as subtle; and as furious and able to do you a mischief, if God restrain him not. A world of wicked men about you; each one more stiff in error than you in the truth; and more fast to the devil than you are to God, (if his grace do not hold you faster than you will hold yourselves;) and therefore they are more able to deceive you, than you are to undeceive them: many of them are crafty and can puzzle such ignorant beginners as you, and put a face of reverence and truth upon damnable errors, and pernicious ways; and those that have not wit, have foolish

violence, and scorn, and passion, and can drive you towards hell, if they cannot draw you. All these enemies you must conquer, or you are lost. And is it not time for a man in so much danger to consider of them, that he may know how to escape? And for one that is compassed about with such difficulties, to consider how he may well get through them? What abundance of things have you to consider of? of all your life past; of the relations you have borne; and how you have performed the duties of those relations? Of the time you have had; and how you have spent it? Of the means you have had, and what you have received by them? Of the present state of your souls, your sins, your miseries, your hopes, and the duties that are incumbent on you, in order to your recovery. Of the temptations to be encountered with; and the graces that are daily to be exercised and confirmed! Would not a man bethink himself with all possible care, and consider, a hundred times consider, that hath all this to do, or be undone for ever? You have much to know that will not easily be known, and yet must be known; much to do, receive and suffer, that hath difficulty adjoined with necessity: were it necessary and not hard, the facility might draw you to make light of it. And were it hard and not necessary the difficulty might more discourage you than the matter would excite you: but when it must be done, or you must be shut out of heaven, and lie in hell for it world without end, and yet there are so many difficulties in the way, I think it is time to look about you, and seriously consider.

12. To conclude, Consideration would prevent a world of misery, which else would make you consider when it is too late. It must be a principal means of your salvation if ever you be saved. If God have so much mercy for you, he will make you consider; and set your sins in order before you; (Psal. l. 21.) and set hell-fire before your face, and hold your thoughts on it that you cannot look off. He will set before you a crucified Christ, and tell you, that this your sins have done, and make you think of the reason of his sufferings; and what there is in sin that could require it; and what it is to rebel against the Lord, and run yourselves into the consuming fire. Now your thoughts are gadding abroad the world, and straggling after every trifle, and going away from God; but if ever God will save you, he will overtake

your hearts, and fetch them home, and shew them that they have something else to think on. If commands will not serve, he will send out his threatenings, and terrors shall come upon you, and pursue your soul as the wind; Job xxxiii. 15. He will fetch you out of the alehouse, and the gaming-house, and take you off the merry pin, and lay that upon your heart that you shall not easily shake off. If you are taken up with the cares of the world, he will shew you that you have somewhat else to care for; and drown those cares in greater cares. If you have such giddy, unsettled, vagrant minds, that you cannot call in your thoughts of God, nor hold them with him; he will lay those clogs and bolts upon them at first, that shall restrain them from their idle vagaries; and then he will set upon them such a bias, as shall better order them, and fix them for the time to come. Men do not use to go to heaven, and never think of it: and to escape hell-fire, and the plague of sin, and the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, and the rage of satan, and never think on it; nor do they use to mind other matters, and find themselves in heaven, before they ever dreamed of it, or before their hearts were set upon it. No sirs, if ever God will save you, he will make you consider, and again consider, and perhaps with many a sigh and groan; and bring these things so near your hearts, that you shall not only think on them, but feel them; according to that command, Deut. vi. 6, 7. xi. 18—20. They shall be as written before your eyes; you shall think of them when you lie down, and when you rise up, as if they were written upon the tester of your beds; you shall think of them when you sit at home, when you go abroad, as carrying them still with you, which way soever you go. As before, God was not in all your thoughts, so now he will be the sum and end of them all.

And if by your resistance you escape these considerations, believe it, God will bring you to consideration by a severer and more dreadful way. If he do but give your conscience a commission, it will follow you, and bring you to such a consideration as Judas was brought to. If he lay you under his judgments, and speak to you by his rod, and give you a lash with every word, and ask you whether yet you will consider of it? It may bring such things to your thoughts, as you were but little troubled with before. If he say but the word, how soon will your soul be required of

you? And when you lie in hell and feel the smart, you will then consider of it. Now we cannot beg of you to bestow one hour in sober consideration: but then you shall do it without entreaty; then you will be as a man that hath the stone, or gout, or toothach, that cannot forget it, if he would never so fain. Forget your folly, your obstinacy, and unthankfulness then, if you can. Forget God's wrath, and the torment which you feel then if you can. Now you are so busy that you could not have while to think of the matters of the world to come; but then God will give you leisure; you shall have little else to do; you shall have time enough: when you have thought of these things ten thousand years, you shall still have time enough before you to think of them again. You will not consider now, but, when God hath performed the intents of his heart, in the latter days, you shall perfectly consider it; Jer. xxiii. 20. xxx. 24. "O that you were wise, that you understood this; that you would consider your latter end;" Deut. xxxii. 29.

What brings so many thousand souls to hell, but because they would not consider in time? If you could speak with any of those hopeless souls, and ask them, 'How came you to this place of torment?' they would tell you, 'because we did not consider of our case in time; we little thought of this day, though we were told of it; we had a load of sin upon us, and did not consider how we might be relieved: we had Christ and mercy set before us, but we did not consider the worth of them nor how to be made partakers of them: we had time, but we considered not how to make the best of it: we had the work of our salvation lay upon our hands, but we did not consider how we might accomplish it: O had we but considered what now we feel, we might have escaped all this, and have lived with God!' These would be the answers of those miserable souls, if you could but ask them the cause of their misery. There is scarce a thief or a murderer hanged at the gallows, but will cry out, 'O if I had but had the wit and grace to have considered this in time, I need not have come to this!' There is scarce an unthrif that falls into beggary, no nor a man that comes to any mischance, but will say, 'If I had considered it beforehand, I might have prevented it.' Most of the calamities of the world might have been prevented, by timely and sober considerations. God himself doth place men's wickedness

much in their inconsiderateness, and lays the cause of their destruction upon it. Whence is it that Israel was rebellious to astonishment; Isa. i. 3. "Why, Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Job xxxiv. 25—27. "He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead; therefore he knoweth their works, he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways." Why do men live so wilfully in sin, but because "they consider not that they do evil;" Eccles. v. 1. How many such hath the world, that God pronounceth a woe to? Isa. v. 11, 12. That drink, and play, and give themselves to their merriments, "but they regard not the work of the Lord; neither consider the operation of his hands. They consider not in their hearts the folly of their ways;" Isa. xlv. 18—20. When they see God's judgments, they consider not the meaning of them, and therefore lay them not to heart; Isa. lvii. 1, 2.

And when God calleth men to conversion, or reformation, he useth to call them to consideration as the way to it; Hag. i. 5. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways." The son that shall escape the misery of his father, is he that considereth, and turneth away from his transgressions, considereth, and doth not his forefather's work; Ezek. xviii. 14. 20. And when he sendeth the prophet to them, (Ezek. xii. 3.) it is but with this encouragement; "Though they are a rebellious house, it may be they will consider." And David professeth, that Consideration was the beginning of his conversion; Psal. cxix. 59. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy statutes."

I know that it is the Lord, that must renew and revive a sinful soul; but yet, under God, Consideration must do much. O could we but persuade our people to consider, it is not sure possible that they could be as they are, or do as they do. Would so many thousands live in ease and quietness under the guilt of so many sins, and the wrath of God, if they did but well consider of it. Durst they live so peaceably in a state of death and in the slavery of the devil, if they did but well consider of it? Would they do no more to prepare for their speedy appearing before God, and for the es-

caping of hell-fire, if they did but consider of it? Would they swallow down their cups so greedily, and give up themselves to the world so eagerly, if they did but well consider what they do? Methinks they should not. The cause of sin and the devil is so naught, that I should hope to shame it with the most of the ungodly, if I could but bring them to a serious consideration of it. O how the kingdom of satan would down, if we could but tell how to make them considerate! How fast the devil would lose his servants! What abundance Christ would gain! And how many would be saved, if we could but tell how to make men considerate! And one would think that this should be easily done, seeing man is a self-loving, and reasonable creature; but yet to our grief, and great admiration, we cannot bring them to it. I should not doubt, but one sermon, or one sentence of a sermon, might do more good than a hundred do now; if I were but able to persuade the hearers when they come home, to follow it by serious consideration. But we cannot bring them to it; if our lives lay on it, we could not bring them to it; though we know that their own lives and salvation lieth on it, yet can we not bring them to it. They think, and talk of other matters almost as soon as the sermon is done, and they turn loose their thoughts; or if they do read, or hear, or repeat a little, yet cannot we get them to one half hour's secret and sober consideration of their case. This is the reason why it is so rare a thing to see men thoroughly turn to God. This is much of the use of all God's teachings and afflictions too, but to bring men to sober consideration. God knows that sin hath unmanned us, and lost us the use of our reason, where we have most use for it; and therefore the means, and works of God, are to recover us to our reason, and to make us men again: the very graces of his Spirit are to make us to be more reasonable.

And now, before I dismiss this direction, I have a question, and a request to make to thee, whoever thou art that readest these lines. My question is this, 'Hast thou ever soberly considered of thy ways and laid these greatest matters to heart, or hast thou not?' Dost thou ever use to retire into thyself, and spend any time in this needful work? If thou dost not, my request to thee is, that now at last thou wouldst do it without delay. Shall I beg this of thee? Shall the Lord that made thee, that bought thee, that pre-

serveth thee request this of thee; that thou wouldst sometimes betake thyself into some secret place and set thyself purposely to this work of Consideration, and follow it earnestly and close with thy heart till thou hast made something of it, and brought it to a resolution? Wilt thou then spend a little time in reasoning the case with thyself, and calling thy heart to a strict account, and ask thyself, 'What is it that I was made for; and what business was I sent into the world about? And how have I dispatched it? How have I spent my time, my thoughts, my words; and how shall I answer for them? Am I ready to die, if it were this hour? Am I sure of my salvation? Is my soul converted, and truly sanctified by the Holy Ghost? If not, what reason have I to delay? Why do I not set about it, and speedily resolve? Shall I linger till death come and find me unconverted? O then what a sad appearance shall I make before the Lord!' And thus follow on the discourse with your hearts. What say you, sirs? Will you here promise me to bestow but some few hours, if it be but on the Lord's day, or when you are private on the way, or in your beds, or in your shops, in these considerations? I beseech you, as ever you will do any thing at my request, deny me not this request. It is nothing that is unreasonable. If I desired one of you to spend an hour in talking with me, you would grant it; yea, or if it were to ride, or go for me. And will you not be entreated to spend now and then a little time in thinking of the matters of your own salvation? Deny not this much to yourselves, deny it not to God, if you will deny it me. Should you not bethink you a few hours, of the place and state that you must live in for ever? Men will build strong where they think to live long; but a tent or a hut will serve a soldier for a few nights. O, sirs, Everlasting is a long day. In the name of God, let not conscience have such a charge as this against you hereafter: 'Thou art come to thy long home, to thy endless state, before ever thou spentest the space of an hour in deep, and sad, and serious considerations of it, or in trying thy title to it.' O what a confounding charge would this be. I am confident I have the witness of your consciences going along with me, and telling you it is but reasonable, yea, and needful, which I say. If yet you will not do it, and I cannot beg one hour's sober discourse in secret between you and your hearts about these

things, then what remedy, but even to leave you to your misery. But I shall tell you in the conclusion, that I have no hope of that soul, that will not be persuaded to this duty of Consideration. But if I could persuade you to this reasonable, this cheap, this necessary work, and to follow it close, I should have exceeding great hopes of the salvation of you all. I have told you the truth, consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding; 2 Tim. ii. 7. Or if you put me to conclude in harsher terms, they shall be still the oracles of God: "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you;" Psal. l. 22.

And so much for the third direction about Consideration, on which I have staid somewhat long, because I apprehend it of exceeding necessity.

Direct. IV. The fourth direction which I shall give you, that the work of your conversion may not miscarry, is this: 'See that the work of Humiliation be thoroughly done, and break not away from the spirit of contrition before he have done with you; and yet see that you mistake not the nature, and the ends of the work, and that you drive it not on further than God requireth you.'

Here I shall first shew you 1. The true nature of Humiliation. And

II. The use and ends of it. And

III. The mistakes about it, that you must avoid. And

IV. I shall press on the substance of the direction, and shew you the necessity of it.

1. There is a preparatory humiliation that goes before a saving change, which is not to be despised, because it is a drawing nearer unto God, though it be not a faithful closure with him. This preparatory humiliation, which many have that perish, doth chiefly consist in these things following. (1.) It lieth most in the fear of being damned. As it is most in the passions, so most in this of fear. (2.) It consisteth also in some apprehensions of the greatness of our sins, and the wrath of God, that hangs over our heads, and the danger that we are in of being damned for ever. (3.) It consisteth also in some apprehension of the folly that we are guilty of in sinning, and of some repentings that ever we did it, and some remorse of conscience for it. (4.) Hereto may be joined some passions of sorrow, and this expressed by

groans and tears. (5.) And all this may be accompanied with confessions of sin to God and man, and lamentations for our misery, and in some it proceedeth to desperation itself. (6.) And lastly, it may proceed to an indignation against ourselves, and to the taking of a severe revenge on ourselves; yea, more than God would have men take; as Judas did by self-destroying. This desperation, and self-execution are no parts of the preparatory humiliation; but the excess and error of it, and the entrance upon hell.

2. But there is also a Humiliation that is proper to the converted, and which accompanieth salvation, and this containeth in it, all that is in the former, and much more. Even as the rational soul containeth the sensitive and vegetative, and much more. And this saving humiliation consisteth in these following particulars.

1. It beginneth in the understanding. 2. It is rooted in the will. 3. It worketh in the affection. And 4. When there is opportunity it sheweth itself in outward expressions and actions.

1. Humiliation in the understanding, consisteth in a low esteem of ourselves, and in a self-abasing, self-condemning judgment on ourselves; and that in these particulars.

(1.) It consisteth in a deep and solid apprehension of the odiousness of our own sins, habitual and actual, and of ourselves for our sins; and that because they are contrary to the blessed nature and law of God, and so contrary to our own perfection, and chief good. (2.) It consisteth also in a solid and fixed apprehension of our own ill-deserving, because of these sins; so that our judgments do subscribe to the equity of the condemning sentence of the law; and we judge ourselves unworthy of the smallest mercy, and worthy of hell-fire. (3.) It consisteth in an apprehension of our undone and miserable condition in ourselves. Not only as we are the heirs of torment, but as we are void of the image and Spirit of God, and have lost his favour, and are under his displeasure, and enmity by our sin, and have forfeited our part in everlasting glory, and how unable we are to help ourselves.

And [1.] This is in such a measure, that we truly judge our sin and ourselves for sin, to be more odious than any thing else could have made us, and our misery by sin in the foresaid particulars, to be greater than any outward calamity in the

flesh, and than any worldly loss could have procured us. And this we apprehend by a practical judgment, and not only by a bare ineffectual speculation. [2.] And the spring of this is some knowledge of God himself, whose majesty is so glorious, and whose wisdom is so infinite ; who is so good in himself, and unto us, and whose holy nature is contrary to sin ; and who hath an absolute propriety in us, and sovereignty over us. [3.] And also it proceedeth from a knowledge of the true state of man's felicity, which by sin he hath cast away ; that it consisteth in the pleasing and glorifying, and enjoying of God, in loving and delighting in him, and praising him for ever, and having a nature perfectly holy, and fitted hereunto. To see that sin is contrary to this felicity, and hath deprived us of it, is one of the springs of true Humiliation. And [4.] It proceedeth also from a believing knowledge of Christ crucified, whom our sins did put to death, who hath declared in the most lively manner to the world by his cross, and sufferings, what sin is, and what it hath done, and what a case we had brought ourselves into. Thus much of saving Humiliation consisting in the understanding.

2. The principal seat of this Humiliation is in the will, and there it consisteth in these following acts. (1.) As we think basely of ourselves, so the will hath a fixed displacency against ourselves for our sins, and a kind of loathing of ourselves for all our abominations ; as you may read, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. xx. 43. vi. 9. A humble sinner is fallen out with himself, and as he is evil, his heart is against himself.

(2.) There is also in the will a deep repenting that ever we sinned, and wronged God, and abused grace, and have brought ourselves to this as we have done ; so that the humbled soul could wish that he had spent his days in prison, in beggary, or in bodily misery, so that he had not spent them in sin ; and if it were to do again, he would rather choose such a life of shame and calamity in the world, than a life of sin, and would be glad of the exchange.

(3.) A humbled soul is truly willing to grieve for the sins which he hath committed, and to be as deeply sensible of them, and afflicted for them, as God would have him. Even when he cannot shed a tear, yet his will is to shed them. When he cannot feel any deep afflicting of his soul for sin,

his hearty desire is, that he might feel it. He doth a hundred times weep in desire, when he doth it not in act.

(4.) A humble soul is truly willing to humble the flesh itself, by the use of those appointed means by which God would have him bring it in subjection; as by fasting, or abstinence, or mean attire, hard labour, and denying it unnecessary delights. It is a doubt worth the considering, whether any such humbling act must be used, purposely in revenge on ourselves for sin. To which I answer, that we may do nothing in such revenge that God doth not allow, or that makes our body less fit for his service; for that were to be revenged of God, and our souls; but those humbling means which are needful to tame the body, may well be used with this double intention; first and chiefly, as a means for our safety and duty for the time to come; that the flesh may not prevail, and then collaterally we should be the more content that the flesh is put to so much suffering, because it hath been and still is so great an enemy to God, and us, and the cause of all our sin, and misery; and this is the revenge that is warrantable in the penitent, and some think is meant, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

(5.) As the humbled soul hath base thoughts of himself, so he is willing that others should esteem and think of him accordingly, even as a vile, unworthy sinner, so far as his disgrace may be no wrong to the Gospel, or to others, or dishonour to God. His pride is so far taken down, that he can endure to be vilified with some consent; not approving of the sin of any men that doth it maliciously, but consenting to the judgment and rebukes of those that do it truly, and to the judgment of God, even by them that do it maliciously. The humbled soul does not stand defending and unjustly extenuating his sin, and excusing himself, and swelling against the reprove; whatever he may do in a temptation, if this temper were predominant, his pride, and not humility, must be predominant. But he judgeth himself as much as others can justly judge him, and humbly consenteth to be base in men's eyes, till God shall think it meet to raise him, and recover his esteem.

And the root of all this in the will, is, [1.] A love to God whom we have offended. [2.] A hatred of sin that hath offended him, and that hath made us vile. And [3.] A believ-

ing sense of the love, and sufferings of Christ, that in his flesh hath condemned sin ; Rom. viii. 2, 3. And thus you see what humiliation is in the will, which is the very life and soul of true humiliation.

3. Humiliation also consisteth in the affections ; in an unfeigned sorrow for the sin which we have committed, and the corruption which is in sin ; and a shame for these sins ; and a holy fear of God whom we have offended, and of his judgments which we have deserved ; and the hatred of our sins by which we have deserved them. But, as I must further shew you anon, it is not the measure, but the sincerity of these passions, by which you must make a judgment of your state ; and that will be hardly discerned by the passions themselves, but only by so much of the will as is in them, and therefore the will is the safest to judge by.

4. Humiliation also consisteth expressly in the outward action, when opportunity is offered ; and it is not true in the heart, if it refuse to appear without, when God requireth it in your ordinary course. The outward acts of humiliation are these : (1.) A voluntary confession of sin to God, and to men, when God requireth it, and that is, when it is necessary to his honour, to the healing of them that we have endangered, and satisfying the offended ; at least in the hearing of men, in such cases as these to confess them openly to God. An unhumbled soul will refuse this for the shame ; but the humble will freely take shame to themselves, and warn their brethren, and justify God, and give him the glory ; 1 John i. 9. " If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us." Read Mark iii. 6. Levit. v. 5. xvi. 21. xxvi. 40. Numb. v. 6, 7. James v. 16. " Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Prov. xxviii. 13. " He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Not that any man is to confess his secret sins to others, except in case that he cannot otherwise find relief ; nor that a man is to publish those offences of his own, by which he may further dishonour God, and hinder the Gospel. But when the sin is open already, and especially when the offence of others, the hardening of the wicked, the satisfaction of the church concerning our repentance, do require our confession and open lamentation, the humble soul both must and will submit to it ; but the rotten-hearted, unhumbled hypocrite

will confess but in these cases : (1.) When the secrecy of the confession, or the smallness of the fault, or the customariness of such confession, doth make it to be a matter of no great disgrace. (2.) Or when it is so open, that it is in vain to attempt to hide it, and his confession will do nothing to increase the disgrace. (3.) Or when conscience is awakened, or they see they must die, or are forced by some terrible judgment of God. In all these cases the wicked may confess. And so Judas will confess "I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood ;" and Pharaoh will confess, "I and my people have sinned." And a thief on the gallows will confess ; and the vilest wretches on their death-bed will confess. But we have more death-bed confessions than voluntary confessions before the church. Nay, so far hath pride and hypocrisy prevailed, and the ancient discipline of the church been neglected, that I think in most countries in England, there are many more that make confessions on the gallows than personally in the congregations.

(2.) Humiliation must be also expressed by all those external means and signs which God, by Scripture or nature, calleth us to. As by tears and groans, so far as we can seasonably procure them. And by fasting, and laying by our worldly pomp and bravery, and using mean, though decent, attire, and by condescending to men of the lower sort, and stooping to the meanest. By humble language, and carriage ; and by forgiving others on this account, that we are sensible of the greatness of our debts to God. And thus I have briefly shewed you the true nature of Humiliation, that you may know what it is that I am persuading you to, and which you must submit your hearts unto.

II. When I have told you the use and ends of Humiliation, you will see more of the reason of its necessity to yourselves. And first, it is one use of humiliation, to help on the mortification of the flesh, or carnal-self, and to annihilate it as it is the idol of the soul. The nature of man's sinful and miserable estate, is, that he is fallen from God to himself ; and liveth now to himself, studying, and loving, and pleasing himself, his natural self, above God. And a sinner will let go many outward sins, and be driven from the out-works before he will let go carnal-self, and be driven from the castle and strength of sin. There is no part of mortification so necessary, and so hard as self-denial ; in-

deed this doth virtually comprehend all the rest, and if this be done, all is done. If it were but his friends, his superfluities, his house, his lands, perhaps a carnal heart might part with it. But to part with his life, his all, his self, this is a hard saying to him, and enough to make him go away sorrowful, as Luke xviii. 22—24. And, therefore, here appeareth the necessity of humiliation. This layeth all the load on self, and breaketh the heart of the old man, and maketh a man loathe himself, that formerly doted on himself. It layeth this tower of Babel in the dust, and maketh us abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. It setteth the house on fire about our ears, which we both trusted and delighted in. And makes us not only see, but feel, that it is time for us to be gone. Pride is the master-vice in the unsanctified, and it is the part of humiliation to cast it down. Self-seeking is the business of their lives, till humiliation help to turn the stream. And then if you did but see their thoughts, you should see them think most vilely of themselves. And if you do but overhear their prayers, or complaints, you shall hear them still cry out upon themselves, as their greatest enemies.

2. The next use of Humiliation, (and implied in this) is, to mortify those sins which carnal-self doth live upon, and is maintained by; and to stop all the avenues or passages of its provision. Sin is sweet and dear to all that are unsanctified; but humiliation makes it bitter and base. As the Indians cured the Spanish Captain of thirst after gold, by pouring melted gold down his throat; or as children are persuaded from playing with a beehive, when they are once or twice stung by them; or from playing with snappish dogs, when they are bitten by them: so God will teach his children to know what it is to play with sin when they are smarted by it. They will know a nettle from a harmless herb, when they feel the sting. We are so apt to live by sense, that God seeth it needful, that our faith have something of sense to help it. When the conscience doth accuse, and the heart is smarting, and groaning in pain, and we feel that no shifting or striving will deliver us, then we begin to be wiser than before, and to know what sin is, and what it will do for us. When that which was our delight, is become our burden, and a burden too heavy for us to bear, it cureth our delighting in it. When David was watering his couch with

his tears, and made them his drink, his sin was not the same thing to him, as it was in the committing. Humiliation washeth away the painting of this harlot, and sheweth her in her deformity. It unmasketh sin, which had got the vizard of virtue, or of a small matter, or harmless thing. It unmasketh satan, who was transformed into a friend, or an angel of light, and sheweth him, as we say, with his cloven feet and horns. How hard is it to cure a worldling of the love of money ! But when God hath laid such a load of it on his conscience, that makes him groan, and cry for help, he hath then enough of it. When he feels those words in James v. 1—4. and he begins to weep and howl for the miseries that are coming on him, and he sees the stink of his corrupted riches, and the canker of his gold and silver doth begin to eat his flesh as fire, and his idol is but a witness against him, then he is better able to judge of it, than he was before. The wanton thinks he hath a happy life, when the harlot's lips do drop as the honey-comb. But when he perceiveth her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword, and that her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell, and he lieth in sorrow, complaining of his folly ; (Prov. v. 2—5. 11, 12.) he is then of a more rectified judgment than he was. Manasseh humbled in irons, is not the same as he was upon the throne. Though grace did more to it than his fetters, yet were they some way serviceable to that end. Humiliation openeth the door of the heart, and telleth you what sin is to the quick ; and letteth in the words of life, which passed no further than the ear or brain. It is a tiring work to talk to dead men, that have lost their feeling ; especially when it is an effective and practical doctrine, which we must deliver to them, which is lost if it be not felt and practised. Till humiliation comes, we speak to dead men, or at least to men that are fast asleep. How many sermons have I heard that, one would think, should have turned men's hearts within them, and make them cry out against their sins, with sorrow and shame in the face of the congregation, and never meddle with them more ! When yet the hearers have scarce been moved by them, but gone away as they came, as if they knew not what the preachers said, because their hearts were all the while asleep within them. But a humbled soul is an awakened soul. It will regard what is said to it ; especially when they perceive that

it cometh from the Lord, and concerneth their salvation. It is a great encouragement to us, to speak to a man that hath ears, and life, and feeling; that will meet the word with an appetite, and take it with some relish, and let down the food that is put into their mouth. The will is the chiefest fort of sin. If we can there get in upon it, we may do something. But if it keep the heart, and we can get no nearer it than the ear or the brain, there will no good be done. Now humiliation openeth us a passage to the heart, that we may assault sin in its strength. When I tell you of the abominable nature of sin, that causeth the death of Christ, and causeth hell, and tell you that it is better to run into the fire, than to commit the least sin wilfully, though it be such as the world makes nothing of; another man may hear all this, and superficially believe it, and say it is true, but it is the humbled soul that feeleth what I say. What a stir have we with a drunkard, or worldling, or any other sensual sinner, in persuading him to cast away his sins with detestation; and all to little purpose! Sometimes he will, and sometimes he must needs be tasting them again; and thus he stands dallying, because the word hath not mastered his heart. But when God comes in upon the soul as with a tempest, and throweth open the doors, and, as it were, thundereth, and lighteneth in the conscience; and layeth hold upon the sinner, and shaketh him all in pieces by his terrors, and asketh him, ‘Is sinning good for thee? Is a fleshly, careless life so good? Thou wretched worm! Thou foolish piece of clay! Darest thou thus abuse me to my face? Dost thou not know that I look on? Is this the work that I made thee for, and that I feed and preserve thee, and continue thee alive for? Away with thy sin, without any more ado, or I will have thy soul away, and deliver thee to the tormentors’. This wakeneth him out of his dalliance and delays; and makes him see that God is in good earnest with him, and therefore he must be so with God. If a physician have a patient that is addicted to his appetite, who hath the gout or stone, or other disease, and he forbid him wine, or strong drink, or such meats as he desireth, as long as he feels himself at ease he will be venturing on them, and will not be curbed by the words of the physician: but when the fit is on him, and he feels the torment, then he will be ruled. Pain will teach him more effectually than words could do.

When he feeleth what is hurtful to him, and feeleth that it always makes him sick, it will restrain him more than hearing of it could do. So when humiliation doth break your hearts, and make you feel that you are sick of sin, and filleth your soul with smart and sorrow, then you will be the more willing that God should destroy it in you. When it lieth so heavy on you, that you are unable to look up, and makes you go to God with groans and tears, and cry, ‘O Lord be merciful to me a sinner!’ When you are fain to go to ministers for ease to your consciences, and fill their ears with accusations of yourselves, and open even your odious, shameful sins, then you will be content to let them go. Now there is no talking to you of mortification, and the resolute rejecting of your sins; the precepts of the Gospel are too strict for you to submit to. But a broken heart would change your minds. The healthful ploughman saith, ‘Give me that which I love. These physicians would bring us all to their rules, that they may get money by us. I never mean to follow their directions.’ But when sickness is upon him, and he hath tried all his own skill in vain, and pain giveth him no rest, then send for the physician, and then he will do any thing, and take any thing whatever he will give him, so that he may but be eased and recovered. So when your hearts are whole and unhumbed, these preachers and Scriptures are too strict for you; you must have that which you love. Self-conceited, precise ministers must have leave to talk; but you will never believe that God is of their mind, or will damn men for taking that which they have a mind of. O but when these sins are as swords in your hearts, and you begin to feel what ministers told you of, then you will be of another mind. Away then with this sin, there is nothing so odious, so hurtful, so intolerable. O that you could be rid of it, whatever it cost you! Then he will be your best friend that can tell you how to kill it, and be free from it; and he that would draw you out, would be as satan himself to you; Matt. xvi. 22, 23. Gal. xviii. 9. Humiliation diggeth so deep, that it undermineth sin, and the fortress of the devil; when the foundation is rooted up, it will soon be overthrown. When the murderers of Christ were pricked to the heart, they then cry out for counsel to the apostles; Acts ii. 37. When a murderer of the saints is stricken blindfold to the earth, and the Spirit withal doth humble his soul, he will then cry

out, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 37. When a cruel jailor that scourged the servants of Christ, is by an earthquake brought to a heart-quake, he will then cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30.

And here comes in the usefulness of afflictions; even because they are so great advantages to Humiliation. Men will be brought to some reason by extremities. When they lie a dying, a man may talk to them, and they will not so proudly fly in his face, or make a scorn at the word of the Lord, as in their prosperity they did. God will be more regarded when he pleadeth with them with the rod in his hand. Stripes are the best logic and rhetoric for a fool. When sin hath captivated their reason to their flesh, the arguments to convince them may be such as the flesh is capable of perceiving. We may long tell a beast of danger and discomforts, before we can persuade him from that which he loves. Sensuality doth brutify men in too great a measure; and so far as they are brutish, it is not the clearest reasons that will prevail; and if God did not maintain in corrupted man some remnants of free reason, we might preach to beasts as hopefully as to men. But afflictions tend to weaken the enemy that doth captivate them; as prosperity by accident tends to strengthen him. The flesh understandeth the language of the rod better than the language of reason, or of the word of God.

And as the sensible part of our Humiliation promoteth mortification; so the rational and voluntary Humiliation, which is proper to the sanctified, is a principal part of mortification itself. And thus you may see that it is necessary that we be thoroughly humbled, that sin may be thoroughly killed in us.

3. Another use of Humiliation is to fit the soul for a meet entertainment of further grace, and that both for the honour of Christ and grace, and for our own welfare.

(1.) In respect of Christ, it is equal that he should dwell in such souls only as are fit to entertain him. Neither his person, nor his business are such as can suit with the unhumbled heart. Till humiliation make a sinner feel his sin and misery, it is not possible that Christ as Christ should be heartily welcome to him, or received in that sort as his honour doth expect. Who cares for the physician that feels no sickness, and fears not death? He may pass by the

doors of such a man, and he will not call him in; but when pain and fears of death are on him, he will send, and seek, and bid him welcome. Will any man fly to Christ for succour that feeleth not his wants, and danger? Will they hold on him, as the only refuge of their souls, and cleave to him as their only hope, that feel no great need of him? Will they lie at his feet, and beg for mercy, that feel themselves well enough without him? When men do but hear of sin and misery, and superficially believe it, they may coldly look after Christ and grace; and feel the worth of the latter, in such a manner as they feel the weight of the former. But never is Christ valued and sought after as Christ, till sorrow hath taught us how to value him: nor is he entertained in the necessary honour of a Redeemer, till humiliation throw open all the doors: no man can seek him with his whole heart, that seeks him not with a broken heart.

And it is certain that Christ will come on no lower terms into the soul. Though he come to do us good, yet he will have the honour of doing it: though he come to heal us, and not for any need he hath of us, yet he will have the welcome that is due to a physician. He comes to save us, but he will be honoured in our salvation. He inviteth all to the marriage supper, and even compelleth them to come in; but he expecteth that they bring a wedding garment, and come not in a garb that will dishonour his house. Though his grace be free, yet he will not expose it to contempt, but will have the fulness and freeness of it glorified. Though he came not to redeem himself but us, yet he came to be glorified in the work of redemption. He hath no grace so free, as to save those that will not esteem it, and give him thanks for it. And therefore, though faith is enough to accept the gift, yet must it be a thankful faith, that will magnify the giver, and an humble faith that will feel the worth of it, and an obediential faith that will answer the ends of it. And therefore that faith which is the condition of our justification, is fitted as well to the honour of the giver, as the commodity of the receiver. And as reason telleth us that it should be so, so Christ consenteth that it be so. The soul that is truly united to Christ, and partaketh of his nature, doth think its own receiving greatest, where the honour of Christ is greatest; and it cannot take pleasure in the thoughts of such a kind of grace as should dishonour the Lord of grace himself. As

Christ is solicitous for the saving of the soul, so he makes the soul solicitous of the right entertainment of him that saveth it. And therefore though his blood, and not his teaching or his government, was the ransom of our souls; yet he is resolved to justify none by his blood, but on the condition of that faith, which is a hearty consent to his teaching and dominion. It is not in the application or bestowing of Christ's benefits, as it was in the purchasing of them: when he came to ransom us, he consented to be a sufferer, and gave his cheeks to the smiter, and submitted to reproach; he endured the cross, despising the shame, and being reviled, he reviled not again, but prayed for his persecutors: but when he comes by his saving grace into the soul, he will not there be entertained with contempt; for in the flesh he came on purpose to be humbled, but in the Spirit he comes to be exalted: in the flesh he came to condemn the sin that reigned in our flesh, (Rom. viii. 3.) and so was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin; 2 Cor. v. 21. but in the Spirit he comes to conquer our flesh, and by the law of his quickening Spirit, to free us from the law of sin and death; both that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, and also that there might be no condemnation to us, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" Rom. viii. 1, 2. 4. The kingdom of Christ was not worldly; for if it had been worldly, he would have sought to establish it by strength of arms and fighting, which are worldly means; John xviii. 36. But his kingdom is within us; it is a spiritual kingdom; and therefore though in the world he was used with contempt, as a fool, and as a sinner, and a man of sorrows; yet within us he will be used with honour and reverence, as a King and absolute Lord. It was the hour of the executioner and the power of darkness, when he was in his suffering; but it is the hour of his triumph and marriage, and the prevailing power of the heavenly light, when he cometh by saving grace into the soul. On the cross he was as a sinner, and stood in our place, and bore what was our due, and not his own; but in the soul he is the conqueror of sin, and cometh to take possession of his own, and doth the work that belongeth to him in his dignity; and therefore he will there be acknowledged and honoured. On the cross he was pulling down the kingdom of satan, and setting up his own, but in the preparatory purchase: but in the soul he

doth both by immediate execution. On the cross, sin and satan had their full blow at him ; but when he entereth the soul, he hath his blow at them, and ceaseth not till he have destroyed them. In purchasing he expendeth his own ; but in converting he takes possession of that which he purchased. In a word, he came into the world in flesh for his undertaken humiliation ; but he comes into the soul by his Spirit, for his deserved exaltation ; and therefore though he endured to be spit upon in the flesh, he will not endure to be slighted in the soul. And as in the world he was scorned with the title of a king, and crowned with thorns, and clothed in such kingly robes, as might make him the fitter object for their reproach : so when his Spirit entereth into the soul, he will be there enthroned in our most reverent, subjective, and deepest esteem, and crowned with our highest love, and thankfulness, and bowed to with the tenders of obedience, and our praise. The cross shall there be the portion of his enemies, and the crown and sceptre shall be his ; and as all were preferred before him, even Barabbas himself, so all things shall be put under him in the sanctified soul, and he shall be preferred before all.

This is the end of humiliation, to make ready the heart for a fuller entertainment of the Lord that bought it ; and to prepare the way before him, and fit the soul to be the temple of his Spirit. An humbled soul would never have put him off with excuses from oxen, and farms, and wives ; as Luke xiv. and Matt. xxii. but the unhumbled will make light of him.

And (2.) As Christ himself will be honourably received, or not at all, so must the mercies and graces which he offereth. He will not apply his blood and righteousness to them that care not for it. He will not pardon such a mass of iniquities, and remove such mountains as lie upon the soul, for them that feel not the necessity of such a mercy. He will not take men from the power of the devil, and the drudgery of sin, and the suburbs of hell, and make them his members and the sons of God, and the heirs of heaven, that have not learned the value of these benefits, but set more by their very sin and misery, and the trifles of the world. Christ doth not despise his blood, his Spirit, his covenant, his pardon, nor his heavenly inheritance, and therefore he will give them to none that do despise them, till he teacheth them

better to know their worth. Do you think it would stand with the wisdom of Christ, to give such unspeakable blessings as these, to men that have not hearts to value them? Why, it is more to give a man justification and adoption, than to give him all this visible world; the sun, the moon, the firmament, and the earth. And should these be given to one that cares not for them? Why, by this means God should miss of his ends: he should not have the love, the honour, or the thanks that he intended by his gift. It is necessary therefore that the soul be thoroughly humbled, that pardon may be received as pardon, and grace as grace, and not set light by.

And (3.) As this is necessary for the honour both of Christ and grace, so also it is necessary for our own benefit and consolation. The mercy cannot indeed be ours, if humiliation do not make us capable of it. These cordials must be taken into an empty stomach, and not be drowned in phlegm and filth. A man on the gallows will be glad of a pardon; but a stander by, that thinks he is innocent, would not regard it, but take it for an accusation. There is no great sweetness in the name of a Redeemer to an unhumbled soul. It sets naught by the Spirit; the Gospel is no Gospel to it; the tidings of salvation are not so glad to such an one, as the tidings of riches or worldly delights would be. As it is the preparation of the stomach that maketh our meat sweet to us: and the coarsest fare is pleasanter to the sound, than sweetmeats to the sick; so if we were not emptied of ourselves, and vile and lost in our own apprehensions, and if contrition did not quicken our appetites, the Lord himself, and all the miracles of saving grace, would be but as things of naught in our eyes, and we should be weary to hear or think of them. But O, what an inestimable treasure is Christ to the humbled soul! What life is in his promises! What sweetness in every passage of his grace, and what a feast in his immeasurable love!

(4.) Another use of Humiliation, implied in the former, is, that it is necessary to bring men to yield to the terms of the covenant of grace. Nature holds fast its fleshly pleasures, and lives by feeling and upon present things, and knows not how to live upon invisibles by a life of faith. And this is the life that all must live, that will live in Christ; and therefore he calleth them to the forsaking of all; the

crucifying the world and flesh, the denying of themselves, if they will be his disciples. But O, how loath is nature to part with all, and make a full resignation unto Christ ! but fain it would make sure of present things, for fear lest the promises of heaven should but deceive them, and then they would have heaven at last in reserve. And on these terms it is that hypocrites are religious, and thus it is that they deceive their souls. But when the heart is truly broken, it will then stand no longer on such terms with Christ, but yield up all : it will then no longer condition with him, but stand to his conditions, and thankfully accept them. Any thing will then serve with Christ, and grace, and the hopes of glory.

(5.) Another use of Humiliation is, to fit us for the retaining and improving of grace, when we have received it. The proverb is, “ Lightly come, lightly go.” If God should give the pardon of sin to the unhumbled, how soon would it be cast away ? And how easily would such be hearkening to temptation, and returning to their vomit ! The burnt child, we say, dreads the fire. When sin hath killed you once, and broken your hearts, you will think the worse of it while you live. And when a temptation comes, you will think of your former smart. ‘ Is not this it that cost me so many groans, and laid me in the dust, and had almost damned me ? and shall I go to it again ? Was I so hardly recovered by a miracle of mercy ? And shall I run again into the misery that I was saved from ? Had I not sorrow, and fear, and care enough, but I must go back again for more, and renew my trouble ?’ Thus the remembrance of your sorrows, will be a continual preservative to you. And a contrite spirit that is emptied of itself, and is taught the worth of Christ and mercy, will not only hold them fast, but will know how to use them, in thankfulness to God and benefit to himself.

(6.) Another use of Humiliation, is, to fit the soul for its approach to God himself, from whom it had revolted. As it beseems not any creature to approach the God of heaven, but in reverential humility, so it beseems not any sinner to approach him, but in contrite humility : who can come out of such wickedness and misery, and not bring along the sense of it on his heart ? It beseemeth not a prodigal to meet his father as confidently and boldly, as if he had never departed from him ; but to say, “ Father, I have sinned against heaven

and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ;” Luke xv. 18. It is not ingenuous for a guilty soul, or one that is snatched as a brand out of the fire, to look towards God with a brazen face, but with shame and sorrow to hang down the head, and smite upon the breast, and say, “ O Lord be merciful to me a sinner.” “ For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble ;” 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 6. “ Though the Lord be high, yet he hath regard unto the lowly : but the proud he knoweth afar off ;” Psal. cxxxviii. 6. “ For thus saith the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity ; whose name is Holy ; and I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones ;” Isa. lvii. 15. “ To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word ;” Isa. lxvi. 2. “ The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit ;” Psal. xxxiv. 18. “ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise ;” Psal. li. 17. There is no turning to God, unless we “ loathe ourselves for all our abominations ;” Ezek. xvi. 63.

The nearer we approach him, the more we must “ abhor ourselves in dust and ashes ;” Job xlii. 6. He will not embrace a sinner in his dung ; but will first wash and cleanse him ; Isa. i. 16. Conversion must make us humble, and as little children, that are teachable, and look not after great matters in the world, or else there is no entering the kingdom of God ; Matt. xviii. 3, 4. And thus you see the uses and necessity of Humiliation.

III. By what hath been already said, you may perceive what mistakes are carefully to be avoided, about your Humiliation, and with what caution it must be sought.

1. One error that you must take heed of, is, that you take not Humiliation for an indifferent thing, or for such an appurtenance of faith as may be spared : think not an unhumiliated soul, while such, can be sanctified. Some carnal hearts conceive, that it is only more heinous sinners that must be contrite and brokenhearted ; and that this is not necessary to them that have been brought up civilly or religiously from their youth. But it is as possible to be saved without faith, as without repentance, and that special humiliation

which I described to you before, it is part of your sanctification.

2. Another mistake to be carefully avoided, is, the placing of your Humiliation, either only, or principally, in the passionate part, or in the outward expression of those passions. I mean, either in pinching grief, and sorrow of heart, or else in tears. But you must remember that the life of it is, as was said before, in the judgment and the will. It is not the measure of passionate sorrow and anguish that will best shew the measure of your sincere humiliation ; much less is it your tears or outward expressions. But it is your low esteem of yourselves, and contentedness to be vile in the eyes of others ; and your displacency with yourselves, and willingness to mourn and weep for sin as much as God would have you, with the rest of the acts of the judgment and will before described.

Two great dangers are here before you to be avoided. First, some there be that have terrible pangs of sorrow, and are ready to tear their own hair, yea, to make away themselves, as Judas, in the horror of their consciences ; and these may seem to have true humiliation, and yet have none. And some can weep abundantly at a sermon or in a prayer, or in mentioning their sin to others ; and therefore think that they are truly humbled ; and yet it may be nothing so. For if at the same time their hearts are in love with sin, or had rather keep it than let it go, or have not an habitual hatred to it, and a predominant, superlative love to God, their humiliation is no saving work. That which is in the passions and tears, may be even forced against your wills ; and it signifieth scarce so much as a common grace, were you are not willing of it. Many an one can weep through a passionate, womanish, tender nature, and yet not only remain unhumbled, but be proud in a very high degree. How many such do we ordinarily see ; especially women, that can weep more at a duty or conference, than some that are truly broken-hearted could do in all their lives ; and yet be so far from being vile in their own eyes, and willing to be so in the eyes of others, that they will hate, and reproach, and rail at those that charge them with the faults which they seemed to lament ; or at least that charge them with disgraceful sins ; and they will excuse and mince their sins, and make a small matter of them, and love none so well as those that

have the highest thoughts of them. So that pride doth ordinarily reign in their hearts, and break out in their words and lives, and make them hate the most faithful reprovers, and live in contention with any that dishonour them, for all the tears that come from their eyes. Judge not therefore by passions, or tears alone, but by the judgment and the will, as is aforesaid.

2. Another sort there are much better and happier than the former, that yet to their great trouble are mistaken in this point; and that is, they that think they have no true humiliation because they find not such pangs of sorrow, and freedom of tears, as others have, when as their hearts are contrite, even when they cannot weep a tear. Tell me but this; are you vile in your own eyes, because you are guilty of sin, and that against the Lord whom you chiefly love? Do you loathe your sins, because of your abominations, and could you heartily wish, that you had been suffering when you were sinning? And if it were to do again, would you choose to suffer rather than to sin? Have you a desire to grieve, and a desire to weep when you cannot weep? Can you quietly bear it, when you are vilified by others, because you know yourselves to be so vile? And are you thankful to a plain reprove, though he tell you of the most disgraceful sin? Do you think meanly of your own sayings and doings and think better of others, where there is any ground, than of yourselves? Do you justify God's afflictions, and men's true rebukes, and think yourselves unworthy of the communion of the saints, or to see their faces, and unworthy to live on the face of the earth? Yea, would you justify if he should condemn you? This is the state of an humbled soul. Find but this, and you need not doubt of God's acceptance though you were unable to shed a tear. There is more humiliation in a base esteem of ourselves, than in a thousand tears; and more in a will, or desire to weep for sin, than in tears, that come through force of terror, or moisture of the brain, or passionate tenderness of nature. If the will be right you need not fear. It is he that most hateth sin, and is most hardly drawn to it, that is most truly humbled for it. He that will lament it to-day and commit it to-morrow, is far less humbled and penitent than he that would not be drawn to it with the hopes of all the pleasures of the world, nor commit it, if it were to save his life.

3. To avoid this, some run into the contrary mistake, and think that sorrow and tears are unnecessary, and that they may repent as well without them as with them; and they lay all in some dull, ineffectual wishes, and so they think the heart is changed. But certainly God made not the affections in vain. It cannot be that any man can have a sanctified will, but his affections will hold some correspondence with it, and be commanded by it. Though we cannot mourn in that measure as we desire, yet some sorrow there will be wherever the heart is truly changed: and apparently this sorrow will be the greatest. No man can heartily believe that sin is the greatest evil to his soul, and not be grieved for it. And indeed our liveliest affections should be exercised about these most weighty things. It is a shame to see a man mourn for a friend, and whine under a cross that toucheth but the flesh, and yet beso insensible of the plague of sin, and the anger of the Lord, and to laugh and jest with such mountains on his soul. Though grief and tears be not the heart, or principal part of our humiliation, yet are they to be looked after as our duty; yea, sorrow in some measure is of absolute necessity, and the want of tears is no good sign in them that have tears for other things. Indeed the sense of our folly and unkindness should be so great, that it should even turn our hearts into sorrow, and melt them in our breasts, and draw forth streams of tears from our eyes; and if we cannot bring ourselves to this, we must yet lament the hardness of our hearts, and not excuse it.

4. In the next place you are hence informed, how to answer that question, ‘Whether it be possible for a man to be humbled and repent too much?’ That part of humiliation which consisteth in the acts of the understanding and the will, cannot be too much as to the intention of the act; and if it be too much as to the objective extent, then, as it is misguided, so it changeth its nature, and ceaseth to be the thing that it was before. A man may think worse of himself than he is, by thinking falsely of himself, as that he is guilty of the sin which he is not guilty of; but this is not the same thing with true humiliation. But to have too clear an apprehension of the evil of his sin and his own vileness, this he need not fear. And in the will it is more clear: no man can be too willing to be rid of sin in God’s time and way; nor be too much averse from it, as it is against the Lord. But

then the other part of Humiliation, which consisteth in the depth of sorrow, or in tears, may possibly be too much ; though I know very few that are guilty of it, or need to fear it ; because the common case of the world is to be stupid, and hard-hearted ; and most of the godly are lamentably insensible. But yet some few there are, that have need of this advice, that they strive not for too great a measure of grief. Let your hearts be against sin as much as is possible ; but yet let there be some limits in your grief and tears. And this counsel is necessary to these sorts of people. 1. To melancholy people, that are in danger of being distracted, and made unreasonable and useless by overmuch sorrow. Their thoughts will be fixing, and musing, and sad, and dark, and full of fears, and either make things worse than they are, or else be more deeply affected with them than their heads can bear. 2. And this is the case of some weak-spirited women that are not melancholy ; but yet by natural weakness of their brains, and strength of their passions, are unable to endure those serious, deep, affecting apprehensions which others may desire ; but the depth of their sensibility, and greatness of their passion, doth presently endanger the crazing of their brains, and quickly cast them into melancholy, or worse.

And this is a very heavy affliction, where it comes, both to the persons themselves, and those about them. To be deprived of the use of reason, is one of the greatest corporal calamities in this life. And it is matter of offence and dishonour to the Gospel in the eyes of the ungodly, that understand not the case. When they see any languish in unmeasurable sorrow, or fall into distraction, it is a grievous temptation to them to fly from religion, and avoid godly sorrow, and all serious thoughts of heavenly things, and it occasioneth the foolish scorers to say, that religion makes men mad ; and that this humiliation and conversion which we call them to, is the way to bring them out of their wits. So that by reason of the grief of the godly, and the hardening of the ungodly, the case is so sad that it requireth our greatest care to avoid it.

Quest. ‘But if it be so dangerous to sorrow either too little or too much, what shall a poor sinner do in such a strait ? And how shall he know when to restrain his sorrows ?’

Answ. It is but very few in the world that have cause to fear excess of this kind of sorrow. The common case of men, is to be blockish, and worldly sorrow doth cast more into melancholy and distraction than godly sorrow; but for those few that are in danger of excess, I shall first tell you how to discern it, and then how to remedy it.

1. When your sorrow is greater than your brains can bear, without apparent danger of distraction, or a melancholy disturbance and diminution of your understanding, then it is certainly too much, and to be restrained. For if you overthrow your reason, you will be a reproach to religion, and you will be fit for nothing that is truly good, either to your own edification, or the service of God.

2. If you be in any grievous disease, which sorrow would increase to the hazard of your life, you have reason to restrain it: though you may not forbear repenting, or carefulness of your salvation, yet the passion of grief you must moderate and abate.

3. When sorrow is so great as to discompose your mind, or enfeeble your body, so as to unfit you for the service of God, and make you more unable to do good, or receive good, you have reason then to moderate and restrain it.

4. When the greatness of your sorrow doth overmatch the necessary measure of your love, or joy, or thanks, and keep out these, and takes up more of your spirit than its part, having no room for greater duties, then it is excessive and to be restrained. There are some that will strive and struggle with their hearts, to wring out a few tears, and increase their sorrow, that yet make little conscience of other affections, and will not strive half so much to increase their faith, and love, and joy.

5. When your sorrow by the greatness of it, doth draw you into temptation, either to despair, or think hardly of God and his service, or to undervalue his grace and the satisfaction of Christ, as if it were too scant, and insufficient for you, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it.

6. When your sorrow is unseasonable, and will needs thrust in at those times when you are called to thankfulness, and joy, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it at that season. Not that we should wholly lay by sorrow in any day of joy and thanksgiving, unless we could lay by all our sin in the duties of that day; nor should we wholly lay

by spiritual comfort and delight, in days of greatest humiliation. For as our state is here mixed of grace and sin, so must all our duties be mixed of joy and sorrow. It is only in heaven where we must have unmixed joys, and only in hell that there are unmixed sorrows; or at least, not in any state of grace. But yet for all that there are seasons now, when one of these must be more eminently exercised, and the other in a lower measure. As in times of calamity, and after a fall, we are called out so much to humiliation, that comfort should but moderate our sorrows, and the exercise of it be veiled for that time: so in times of special mercies from the Lord, we may be called out to exercise our thanks, and praise, and joy so eminently, that sorrow should but keep us humble, and be, as it were, serviceable to our joys. When grace and mercy are most eminent, then joy and praise should be predominant (which is through the most of a Christian's life, that walketh uprightly and carefully with God;) and when sin and judgments are most eminent, sorrow must be then predominant, as being a necessary means to solid joy. And therefore, ordinarily, a sinner that is but in the work of conversion, and newly coming to God from a rebellious state, must entertain more sorrow, and let out himself more to groans and tears than afterwards when he is brought to reconciliation with God, and walketh in integrity.

Quest. 'But when is it that my sorrow is too short, and I should labour to increase it?'

Ans. 1. When there is no apparent danger of the last-mentioned evils, that is, of destroying your bodies, distracting your brains, discomposing your minds, and drowning other graces and duties, and the rest; then you have little cause to be afraid of an excess.

2. When you have not smart enough to cause you to value the love of Christ, and highly prize his blood, and the effects of it, and hunger and thirst after him and his righteousness, and earnestly beg for the pardon of your sin; you have cause to desire then more sorrow. If you feel no great need of Christ, but pass by him as lightly as the full stomach by his food, as if you could do well enough without him; you may be sure then you have need to be broken more. If you set not so much by the love of God that you would part with any thing in the world to enjoy it, and would think no terms too dear for heaven; you have need to lie under the

sense of your sin and misery a little longer, and to beseech the Lord to save you from that heart of stone. When you can hear of the love and sufferings of your Redeemer, without any warmth of love to him again, and can read or hear the promise of grace, and offers of Christ, and eternal life, without any considerable joy, or thankfulness, it is time for you then to beg of God a tender heart.

3. When you make many pauses in the work of your conversion, and are sometimes in a good mind and then again at a stand, as if you were yet unresolved whether to turn or no: when you stick at Christ's terms of denying yourselves, and crucifying the flesh, and forsaking all for the hopes of glory, and think these sayings somewhat hard, and are considering of the matter whether you should yield to them or not, or are secretly reserving somewhat to yourselves; this certainly shews that you are not yet sufficiently humbled, or else you would never stand trifling thus with God. He must yet set your sins in order before you, and hold you awhile over the fire of hell, and ring your consciences such a peal, as shall make you yield and resolve your doubts, and teach you not to dally with your Maker. If Pharaoh himself be off and on with God, and sometimes he will let Israel go, and then again he will not; God will follow him with plague after plague, till he make him yield, and glad to drive or hasten them away. And even where he deals in ways of grace, he maketh so much use of sorrows, as to make men yield the sooner to his terms, and glad to have mercy on such terms, if they were harder.

4. When you are heartless and dull under the ordinances of God, and Scripture hath little life or sweetness to you, and you are almost indifferent whether you call upon God in secret or no, and whether you go to the congregation, and hear the word, and join in God's praises and the communion of the saints, and you have no great relish in holy conference, or any ordinance, but do them almost merely for custom, or to please your consciences, and not for any great need you feel of them, or good you find by them; this shews for certain you want some more of the rod and spur; your hearts be not awakened and broken sufficiently, but God must take you in hand again.

5. When you can be mindless of God, and of the life to come, and forget both your sins and Saviour's blood, and

set out your thoughts almost continually upon worldly vanities or common things, as if you were overgrown the need of Christ; this shews that the stone is yet in your hearts, and that God must keep you to a harder diet to mend your appetites, and make you feel your sin and misery, till it call off your thoughts from things that less concern you, and teach you to mind your everlasting state. If you begin to forget yourselves and him, it is time for you to have a remembrancer.

6. When you begin to taste more sweetness in the creature, and be more tickled with applause and honour, and pleased more with a full estate, and more impatient with poverty, or wants, or wrongs from men, and crosses in the world; and when you are set upon a thriving course, and are eager to grow rich, and fall in love with money; when you drown yourselves in worldly cares and business, and are cumbered about many things, through your own choice; this shews indeed that you are dangerously unhumbled; and if God have mercy for you, he will bring you low, and make your riches gall and wormwood to you, and abate your appetite, and teach you to know that one thing is needful; and to be more eager after the food that perisheth not, and hereafter to choose the better part; Luke x. 41, 42. John vi. 27.

7. When you can return to play with the occasions of sin, or look upon it with a reconcileable mind, as if you had yet some mind on it, and could almost find in your heart to be doing with it again; when you begin to have a mind of your old company and courses, or begin to draw as near it as you dare, and are gazing upon the bait, and tasting of the forbidden thing, and can scarce tell how to deny your fancies, your appetites, your senses, your desires; this shews that you want some wakening work: God must yet read you another lecture in the black book, and set you to spell those lines of blood which it seems you have forgotten; and kindle a little of that fire in your consciences, which else you would run into, till you feel and understand, whether it be good playing with sin, and the wrath of God, and the everlasting fire.

8. When you begin to be indifferent as to your communion with God, and think not much whether he accept you, and manifest his love to you or not, but can huddle up your prayers, and look no more after them, or what becomes of

them, and use ordinances, and seldom inquire of the success ; when you can spare the spiritual consolations of the saints, and fetch little of your comforts from Christ or heaven ; but from your friends, and health and prosperity, and accommodations ; and perhaps can be as merry in carnal company, when you say and do as they, as if you were considering of the love of Christ, this shews that the threatenings went not deep enough. Sorrow hath yet another part to play : you must be taught better to know your home, and to take more pleasure in your Father, and your Husband, and your brethren, and your inheritance, than in strangers, or enemies to God and you.

9. When you begin to grow wanton with ordinances or other mercies, and instead of thankful receiving them, and feeding on them, you pick quarrels with them, and nothing will please you ; either the minister is too weak, or he is too curious, or too formal ; you must have it this way or that way ; either you must have more of a form, or no form ; in this gesture, or that order, and something or other is still amiss : this shews that you want humbling, and that you are fitter for the rod, than for meat. If God do but open you a door into your hearts, and shew you the monsters and emptiness that are there, you will see, that the fault lay somewhere else than in the minister, or the ordinances : if it were in them, it was more in you. The cause of your loathing, and quarrelling with the world, was the fulness of your own stomach ; and God must give you a vomit or purge, that shall make your hearts ache before it hath done working, and then your appetites will be mended, and your wantonness will cease ; and that will be sweet to you which before you slighted.

10. When you begin to be leavened with pride, and think highly of yourselves, and have good conceits of your own parts and performances, and would be noted, and taken for somebody among the godly, and you cannot endure to be overlooked or passed by : when you think meanly of other men's parts and duties in comparison of yours, and think yourselves as wise as your teachers, and begin to hear them as judges with a magisterial spirit, and think you could do as well as this yourselves ; when you are finding fault with that which should nourish you, and in every sermon you are most noting the defects, and think that this you could have

mended ; when you itch to be teachers yourselves, and think yourselves fitter to preach than to learn, to rule than to be ruled, to answer than to ask for resolution ; when you think so well of yourselves, that the church is not pure or good enough for your company, though Christ disowneth it not, and they force you not to sin ; when you grow censorious, and aggravate the faults of others, and extenuate their graces, and can see a mote in another's eye, but will discern none of their graces, if they be not as high as mountains ; and none can pass for godly with you, but those of the most eminent magnitude ; when you are itching after novelties in religion, and setting your wisdom against the present or ancient church ; and affecting singularity, because you will be of no common way ; when you cannot hear this minister, nor that minister, though the ministers of Christ ; and you are harping upon that, " Come out from among them, and be ye separate ;" as if Christ had called you to come out of the church, when he called you to come out of the company of infidels : all this cries aloud for further humiliation ; you have a tympany that must be pricked, to let out the wind that puffs you up : if you be not for perdition, and to be forsaken, and given over to yourselves, you must be fetched over again, and humbled with a witness. When God hath turned your inside outward, and shewed you that you are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and that you are empty nothings, who thought so well of yourselves ; he will then make you stoop to those that you despised, and think yourselves unworthy of the communion of those that before you thought unworthy of yours. He will make you think you are unworthy to hear those ministers that you turned your back upon ; and he will take down your teaching, talking vein, and make you glad again to be learners : in a word, he will by conversion make you as little children, or you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And this spiritual pride is a most lamentable disease, and the issue usually is exceeding sad. For with many, it is the forerunner of damnable apostasy, and God gives them over to their own conceits, and the wisdom which they so esteem, till it have led them to perdition. And those that are cured, are many of them cured by the saddest way of any men in the world. For it is usual with God to let them alone, till they have run themselves into some abominable

error, or fallen into some shameful, scandalous sin, till they are made an hissing and bye-word among men; that shame and confusion may bring them to their wits, and they may learn to know what it was that they were proud of, and see that they were but silly worms.

And thus I have shewed you, when you must seek after deeper humiliation, and may conclude that you are not humbled enough. Yea, and when a greater measure is of some necessity to your souls.

Quest. 'Well, but yet you have not told us what course a poor sinner should take in such a strait, when he knows not whether his humiliation, as to the affectionate part, be too little or too much.'

Answ. 1. You may partly discern yourselves by what is said, whether you have need of more or less humiliation, if you can but try your hearts by these signs. 2. But yet I would advise, and earnestly persuade you, in cases of difficulty, to betake yourselves to some able, faithful minister for resolution. If you feel sorrow seize so deep upon your spirits, that it distempereth you, or threateneth your understanding, or your health, especially if you are either passionate women, or melancholy persons: stay not then any longer, lest delay do that which easily cannot be undone, but go and open your case and crave advice. This is a principal use of pastors, that you should have them at hand, to advise with in the diseases and dangers of your souls, as you do with physicians, in the diseases and dangers of the body. Lay by all sinful bashfulness, and trust not yourselves any longer with your own skill, but go to them that God hath set in office over you for such uses as these, and tell them your case: this is God's way, and he will bless his own ordinance: melancholy and passionate distempered persons are not fit judges of their own condition. In this case you must distrust your own understanding, and be not self-conceited, and stick not obstinately to every fancy that comes into your heads, but in the sense of your weakness rely upon the guidance of your faithful overseers, till your distempers are overcome, and you are made more capable of discerning for yourselves.

5. You are further to be informed, that it is not for itself that sorrow and tears are so desirable, but as they are expressions of a gracious temper of the will, and as they help

on the ends that Humiliation is appointed to. And therefore you may hence learn in what sort you must seek after it. (1.) You must not place the chief part of your religion in it, as if it were a life of mere sorrow, that we are called to by the Gospel. But you must make it a servant to your faith, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and other graces. As the use of the needle is but to make way for the thread, and then it is the thread and not the needle that makes the seam; so much of our sorrow is but to prepare for faith and love, and these are they that close the soul with Christ. It is therefore a sore mistake with some, that are very apprehensive of their want of sorrow, but little of their want of faith or love; and that pray and strive to break their hearts, or weep for sin, but not much for those higher graces, which it tendeth to. One must be done, and not the other left undone.

(2.) As tears are the expression of the heart, so those are the most kindly and sincere, which voluntarily flow from the inward feeling of the evil that we lament; if you could weep never so much, merely because you think that tears are in themselves necessary, and had not within, the hatred of sin, and sense of its vile and killing nature; this were not true humiliation at all. And if the heart be humbled before the Lord, it is not the want of tears that will cause him to despise it. Some are so backward to weep by nature, that they cannot weep for any outward thing, no, not for the loss of the dearest friend, when yet they would have done ten times more to redeem his life, than some that have tears at will. Groans are as sure expressions of sorrow as tears, with such as these. And the hearty rejection and detestation of sin, is yet a better evidence than either. But where men have naturally a weeping disposition, which they can manifest about crosses in the world, and yet cannot shed a tear for sin, there the case is the more suspicious.

(3.) The principal cause why you must strive for deeper sorrow, is, that you may obtain the ends of that sorrow; that sin may be more odious to you, and more effectually mortified; that self may be taken down, and Christ may be valued and desired, and exalted, and that you may be fitted for a holy communion with God for the time to come, and saved from pride, and kept in watchfulness.

6. From this that was last said, you have a rule by which

you may certainly discern, what measure of Humiliation it is that must be had. It must go so deep as to undermine our pride, and so far the heart must needs be broken, as is necessary to break the heart of sin, and carnal self. If this be not done, there is nothing done, though you weep out your eyes. You must be brought so low, that the blood of Christ, and the favour of God, may be more precious in your eyes than all the world, and in your very hearts preferred before it : and then you may be sure that your humiliation is sincere, whether you have tears or none.

7. From hence also you may see, that you must take heed of ascribing to your own humiliation any part of the office and honour of Christ : think not that you can satisfy the justice of the law, or merit any thing of God by the worth of your sorrows, though you should weep even tears of blood. It is not true humiliation if it consist not in the sense and acknowledgment of your unworthiness, and desert of condemnation, and if it do not lead you to look out for pardon and life from Christ, as being lost and wholly insufficient for yourselves. And therefore it would be a plain contradiction, if true humiliation should be taken as satisfaction or merit, or trusted on instead of Christ.

iv. Having thus far opened the nature and reasons of true Humiliation, I conclude with that advice which I principally here intended ; refuse not to be thoroughly and deeply humbled. Be not weary of the humbling workings of the Spirit. Grief is an unwelcome guest to nature ; but grace can see reason to bid it welcome. Grace is ingenuous, and cannot look back on so great unkindness, with unwillingness to mourn over it ; Zech. xii. 10. There is somewhat of God in godly sorrow, and therefore the soul consenteth to it, and seeketh for it, and calls it in : yea, and is grieved that it can grieve no more. Not that sorrow as sorrow is desirable, but as a necessary consequent of our grievous sinning, and a necessary antecedent of our further recovery : as we may submit to death itself with a cheerful willingness, because it is sanctified to be the passage into glory, how dreadful soever it be to nature in itself ; so much more may we submit to humiliation and brokenness of heart with a holy willingness, because it is sanctified to be the entrance into the state of grace. Consider for your satisfaction of these following things.

1. The main brunt of your sorrows will be but in the beginning : and when once you are settled in a holy course, you will find more peace and comfort, than ever you could have had in any other way. I know if you will be meddling with sin again, it will in its measure breed sorrow again : but a godly life is a life of uprightness, and conversion is a departing from sin, and consequently a departing from the cause of sorrow. And can you not bear such a sorrow for a little while ?

2. Consider but whence you are coming : is it not out of a state of wrath ? And where have you been all this while ? Was it not in the power of satan ? And what have you been doing all your lives ? Hath it not been the drudgery of sin, and the offending of your Lord, and the destroying of yourselves ? And is it meet, is it reasonable, is it ingenuous, for you to come out of such a case, without lamentation that you staid in it so long ?

3. Consider also, that it is necessary to your own recovery and salvation. Do you think to take so dangerous a surfeit, and then to be cured without a vomit ? You will endure for the health of your bodies, the bitterest pills, and most loathsome potions, the shortest diet, and the letting out of your blood, for you know that your life lieth on it, and there is no remedy ; and should you not endure for the saving of your souls, the bitterest sorrows, the keenest rebukes, the freest confessions, and the most plentiful tears ? Sin will not down at easier rates : self will not be conquered else : the heart of it will not be broken, till your hearts be broken. We know your sorrows merit nothing, and make not God amends for your sins, nor is it for want of sufficiency in the blood of Christ that we require them ; but it is part of the fruit of his blood upon your souls. If his blood do not melt and break your hearts, you have no part in him. It becomes you to mourn over him whom you have pierced ; Zech. xii. 10. And this fruit of his blood is a preparative to more. You may as well think of being saved without faith, as without repentance and humiliation.

4. Consider so much as is bitter in it, is of your own preparation ; you may thank yourselves for it. Who was it that brought you to this necessity of sorrow ? Have you been all your lifetime surfeiting of the creature and causing your own disease, and now will you grudge at the trouble of

a cure? Whom have you to blame and find fault with but yourselves? Was it not you that sinned? Was it not you that laid in the fuel of sorrows, and sowed the seeds of this bitter fruit, and cherished the cause of trouble in yourselves? God did not do this; it was you yourselves. He doth but undo that which you have been doing. Grudge not therefore at your physician, if you must be purged, and let blood, and dieted strictly, but thank yourselves for it that have made it so necessary.

5. Consider also that you have a wise and tender Physician, that hath known what sorrow and grief is himself, for he was made for you a man of sorrows; (Isaiah liii. 3.) and therefore can pity those that be in sorrow; he delighteth not in your trouble and grief, but in your cure and after-consolations. And therefore you may be sure that he will deal gently and moderately with you, and lay no more on you than is necessary for your good; nor give you any more bitter a cup than your disease doth require. When he sheweth his greatest liking for the contrite, it is that he may revive their hearts; and he professeth withal, that he will not contend for ever, nor be always wrath, lest the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made; Isaiah lvii. 15, 16. He calls to him the weary and heavy-laden, that he may give them ease; Matt. xi. 28. He was sent to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised; Luke iv. 18. When he hath broken your hearts, he will as tenderly bind them up, and as safely heal them as you can reasonably desire. Even his ministers, that labour to break your hearts, and bring you low, even to the dust, have no worse meaning in it than to bring you to Christ, and life, and comfort; and though they are glad to see the weeping eyes of their hearers, and to hear their free confessions and lamentations, yet this is not because they take pleasure in your trouble, but because they foresee the saving fruits of it, and know it to be necessary to your everlasting peace. You may read what their thoughts are in the words of Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 9—11. “Now I rejoyce, not that you were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive no damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but

the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you ; yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge, &c." Indeed, neither Christ nor his ministers have that fond, foolish love to you, and pity of you, as you have to yourselves : they be not so tender of you, as to save you from the sorrow which is needful to the saving of you from hell. But they would not put you to any more than needs ; nor have you taste a drop of the vinegar and gall, or shed one tear, but what shall tend to your comfort and salvation.

6. Consider what sorrows they be that these sorrows do prevent, and what those suffer in hell, that avoid this godly sorrow on earth. O sirs, your repentant sorrows are joys to those ; yours have hope, but theirs are quickened with desperation ; yours are small and but a drop to their ocean ; yours are curing, but theirs are tormenting ; yours are a father's rod, but theirs are the rack and gallows ; yours are mixed with love, but theirs are unmixed, overwhelming them with confusion ; yours are short, but theirs are endless. And had you rather sorrow as they do, than as the godly do ? Had you rather howl with devils and rebels, than weep with saints and children ? Had you rather be broken in hell by torments, than on earth by grace ? Is it not an unreasonable thing of you, to make such a stir at the sorrow that must save you, when you remember what it would save you from, and what all must suffer that are not humbled here by grace ! O, it is another kind of sorrow that others are now enduring. Grudge not at the pricking of a vein, when so many thousands are everlastingly bleeding at the heart.

7. Consider, the more you are rightly humbled, the sweeter will Christ and all his mercies be to you ever after while you live. One taste of the healing love of Christ, will make you bless those sorrows that prepared for it. The same Christ is not equally esteemed even by all that he will save : and had you not rather be emptied yet more of yourselves, that you may be fuller of Christ hereafter ? When you do but feel his arms embracing you, and perceive him in that posture as the prodigal's father was ; (Luke xv. 20.) you will thank that sorrow that fitted you for his arms.

8. If you be thoroughly humbled, you will walk the more

safely all your days, if other things correspond. It will make you hate the sin you smarted by, and fly the occasions of that which cost you so dear.

9. The sin of pride is one of the most mortal, damning sins in the world ; and that which thousands of professors do miscarry by. And humiliation is most directly contrary to this ; and therefore must needs be an amiable and necessary thing. It is worth all the sorrow that a hundred men endure here, to be saved from this dangerous sin of pride.

10. A thorough humiliation is usually a sign of the greater exaltation to come after. For “ those that humble themselves shall be exalted, and those that exalt themselves shall be brought low ;” Luke xiv. 11. “ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he shall lift you up ;” 1 Pet. v. 5. The higher you mean to build, the deeper you will dig to lay the foundation. Your consolations will be greater, as your sorrows have been greater. You may be free from those doubts that follow others all their days, lest they were never truly humbled. You need not be still questioning, or pulling up your foundations, as if you were to begin again. It is a sign that you are intended to greater employments, (if other things concur). Paul must be laid exceeding low in his conversion, that he might be the fitter as a chosen vessel to bear Christ’s name among the Gentiles.

Lay all this now together, sirs, and consider what cause you have to cherish the humbling works of grace, and not to quench them. When your hearts begin to be afflicted for sin, go not among foolish or merry companions to drink or laugh it away. Drive it not out of your minds, as unkindly as if it came to do you hurt ; but get alone, and consider of the matter, and on your knees in secret beseech the Lord to follow it home, and break your hearts, and make you meet for his healing consolations, and not to leave you in this Red Sea, but to bring you through, and put the songs of praise into your mouths.

Direct. V. Having thus directed you about your Humiliation, the next direction which I would offer you, that you may not miscarry in the work of conversion, is this : ‘ See that you close with the Lord Jesus Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely as he is revealed, and offered to you in the Gospel. In this your Christianity doth consist, upon

this your justification and salvation lie. This is the sum of your conversion, and the very heart of the new creature. The rest is all but the preparatives to this, or the fruits of this. Christ is the end and the fulfilling of the law, the substance of the Gospel, the way to the Father, the life, the help, and the hope of the believer; if you know not him, you know nothing; if you possess not him, you have nothing; and if you are out of him, you can do nothing that hath a promise of salvation. And therefore I shall distinctly (though briefly) tell you what it is to close with Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely, as he is offered in the Gospel.

And, 1. That you may close with Christ understandingly, you must look to these things. 1. That you understand who Christ is, as in his person and his offices. 2. That you understand the reason of his undertaking. 3. That you understand what it is that he hath done and suffered for us. 4. That you understand the nature and worth of his benefits, and what he will do for you. 5. That you understand the terms on which he conveyeth these benefits to men; and what is the nature, extent, and condition of the promises. And 6. That you understand the certain truth of all this.

. For the first, you must understand that Jesus Christ hath two natures in one person; that he is both God and man: as he is God, of the same substance with his Father, and one in essence with him, the second person in the blessed Trinity; the Word of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, eternal, incomprehensible, and infinite. As man he hath a true human soul and body, as men have; so that his Godhead, his human soul, and his body, are really distinct. This human nature was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, without man, and born of her, and is so truly united to the Divine nature, as that they are one person: not that the Godhead is turned into the manhood, nor the manhood into the Godhead; but the Godhead hath taken the manhood into personal unity with itself. This was not from eternity, but when man had sinned, and lost himself, and needed a Redeemer. By reason of his miraculous conception, he was free from all original sin, being holy, harmless and undefiled. His person and natures were fit for his office; which was to be Mediator between God and man, to make reconciliation, and recover us to God. Had he not been God, but mere man, his dignity would not have been suffi-

cient for such an interposition, nor his obedience or sufferings of any such value, as to be the price of our redemption. Nor could he have borne our burden, or conquered death, and risen again, and overcome the prince of death, the devil; nor have ruled his church, and preserved and sanctified them, and prospered his cause, and subdued his enemies, nor effectually interceded with the Father, nor judged the world, or raised the dead, and done the work of a perfect Saviour. Nor was the angelical nature sufficient for this office. Had he not been man, he had not been near enough to us, to have suffered in our stead, and taught us by his doctrine, and given us his example, nor could he have suffered or died for us; for God cannot die or suffer. As he is God he is one in nature with the Father; and as he is man, he is one in nature with us; and therefore is fit to mediate for us; and in him we are brought thus nigh to God. To this office of the Mediator there are many acts belonging, from whence it hath several denominations, of which more anon. So much for the person of Christ.

2. The next thing that you must understand, is, the reasons and ends of his undertaking; which though we are not able fully to comprehend, (nor the reason of any of the works of God;) yet must we observe so much as is revealed. And these following ends or reasons of this work, do shew themselves clearly in the Scripture, and in the event.

(1.) One is, The demonstration of God's justice, as he is Governor of the world, according to the law of nature. He made man a rational and voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with desires and hopes of the good, and fears of the evil, and so to be ruled according to his nature. He made for him a law that revealed good and evil, with promises to move him by desire and hope, and with threatenings to drive him by necessary fear. By these engines God resolved to govern mankind. This law was the rule of man's duty, and of his receivings, or of God's judgment. According to this law, the world was to be governed by God. His governing justice consisteth in giving all their due according to his law: at least so far as that the end of the law may be attained, that is, the honour of the lawgiver preserved, transgression made odious by the terror of penalty, and obedience made honourable by its fruits of impunity and reward. Otherwise the law would not have

deterred effectually from evil, nor encouraged to good ; especially to so much as creatures must go through for the crown of life : and so the law would have been no fit instrument for the government of the world ; that is, the law would have been no law. But this the wise and righteous God would not be guilty of, of making a law that was no law, and was unmeet for the ends to which he made it ; which was essential to it as a law. There was no way to avoid this intolerable consequent when man had sinned, but strict execution of the law, or by sufficient satisfaction instead of such an execution. The execution would have destroyed the commonwealth, even the whole inferior world, at least the reasonable creature who was the subject. The wisdom and love, and mercy of God would not give way to this, that the world should be destroyed so soon after it was made, and man left remediless in everlasting misery. Satisfaction therefore must be the remedy : this must be such as might be fit to procure the ends of the law, as if the law itself had been executed ; that is, as if the offenders did all die the death that it did threaten. It must therefore be a public demonstration of justice, and of the odiousness of sin, to the terror and warning of sinners for the future. And this was done with Jesus Christ, when none else in heaven or earth could do it. For it did as fully demonstrate the justice of God, and preserved his honour, and the usefulness of his law and government, that a person so high and glorious, and so dear to him, should suffer so much for sin, as if all the world had suffered for themselves. And thus God “ made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; 2 Cor. v. 21. And thus “ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; Gal. iii. 31.

(2.) Hereby also God demonstrated the holiness of his nature ; how much he hateth sin, and how irreconcilable he is to it, as light to darkness. As the law and judgments of God do proceed from his perfect nature and will, so do they bear the image of that perfection and demonstrate it to the world. This therefore is the nobler end and work of Christ in our redemption, to declare the holiness and perfection of God in his nature and will ; though the former (the declaring of his governing justice,) be the nearer end. If the death of Aaron’s two sons were such a declaration, that “ he will be sanctified in all that draw near him ;” Lev.

x. 2, 3. If his laws and present judgments do declare him to be “ a holy and jealous God, that will not forgive sin without a valuable consideration or satisfaction ; Josh. xxiv. 19. How much more evidently is this declaration in the death of Christ ? If the Bethshemites cry out, “ Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God ? ” (1 Sam. vi. 20.) upon the death of 50,070 men ; how much more may the guilty soul say so, when he thinks on the crucified Son of God ? As it is the end of God’s execution on transgressors, that “ the Lord may be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy may be sanctified in righteousness ; ” (Isa. v. 16.) so was it his end in the sacrifice of his Son.

(3.) Another end of our redemption by Christ, is the demonstration of the infinite wisdom of God. His wisdom in the preventing the ruin of the created world ; that it might not be said that sin and satan had frustrated him of the glory of his creation, and destroyed it almost as soon as he had made it. Yea, in getting an advantage by the malice of his enemies for the more admirable attainment of the ends of his law, and the glorifying of all his governing attributes. He would not have made man a free agent, and left him in the hand of his own will, and suffered him to sin, if his wisdom had not known how to secure his own interest and honour to the full. And so also in the economy and admirable frame of his gracious sapiential government by Christ, the manifold wisdom of God doth shine ; Ephes. iii. 9, 10. As the wonderful structure of heaven and earth, and every part of this natural frame, doth gloriously reveal the wisdom of the Creator ; so the wonderful contrivance of our redemption by Christ, and the reparation of the world by him, and the moral frame of this evangelical dispensation, doth wonderfully demonstrate the wisdom of the Redeemer. And as the observation of our natures may give us cause to say with David, Psal. cxxxix. 14. “ I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ; ” so the observation of our natures and conditions, may well cause us to say, ‘ I will praise thee, for I am graciously and wonderfully redeemed ; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. ’ As nature may teach us to admire the frame of nature ; so grace will teach us to admire the frame of grace, and to see the beauty of its several parts, and much more of the whole, where all the parts are orderly composed.

(4.) Yea, the very power of God is demonstrated in Christ. And therefore he is called, Cor. i. 24. "The power of God and the wisdom of God:" not only formally, because Christ himself is the wise and powerful God; nor only efficiently, because God doth exercise his power and wisdom, by his Son in creation, redemption, and government; but also effectually and objectively, as Christ is the great and most admirable demonstration of the power and wisdom of God in the world.

What work transcendeth the incomprehensible miracle of the incarnation? That God should assume the nature of man into personal union? The creation of the sun is no greater a work of power, than the incarnation and sending of the Son of God, the intellectual sun, the light of the world, that living light, "that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world: though yet the darkness comprehendeth not his light;" John i. 4. 6. 9. What was he but the living visible power of God, when he healed all diseases, cast out devils, raised the dead, and rose from the dead himself, and ascended into glory, and sent down the Holy Spirit on his church, enduing them with power from on high: Acts i. 8. Luke xxiv. 49. When he was on earth he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil;" Acts x. 38. Being dead, "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead;" Rom. i. 4. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive;" Eph. iv. 8. Yea, he filled his servants with power; Acts vi. 8. Even such as was admired and desired by the ungodly; Acts viii. 19. He being "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;" Heb. i. 3, 4. As Christ therefore in his glorified humanity united to the Godhead, is far more excellent than the angels of God, and more glorious than the sun, so is the power of God more abundantly demonstrated in him, than in the sun, or the angels, or any other creature. The illuminated do know this, "and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe; according to the working of

his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the celestials, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all;" Ephes. i. 19—23.

Besides this, even in the works of Christ for his church, his calling, and sanctifying, and ruling, and preserving them, his subduing their enemies, and raising them from the dead, and glorifying them with himself, how glorious is the very power of God by his Son; 2 Thess. i. 11. Phil. iii. 10. Eph. iii. 7. 20. 2 Pet. i. 3. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 20. Ephes. vi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 43. 1 Pet. i. 5. And, therefore, his Gospel may well be called, "The power of God to salvation; Rom. i. 16. Which hath been the instrument of his power in doing such wonderful works in the world; 1 Cor. i. 18. ii. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 4.

(5.) But the most sweet and conspicuous end of our redemption, was the demonstration of God's love and mercy to mankind, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory; Rom. ix. 23. Of all God's attributes, there is none shineth more illustriously in the work of our redemption than love and mercy. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us;" 1 John iii. 16. By the creation and sustentation of us we perceive the love of God, but more abundantly by our redemption. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him; 1 John iv. 9. O wonderful love which condescendeth to such rebels, and embraceth such unworthy and polluted sinners, and pitieth them even in their blood! Even after we had sold ourselves to satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation, and had all come short of the glory of God, and were sentenced to death, and ready for the execution, then did this wonderful love step in, and rescue and recover us. Not staying till we repented and cried for mercy, and cast ourselves at his feet; but seeking us in the wilderness, and finding us before we felt that we were lost, and being found of us before we sought him, and beginning to us in the depth of

our misery. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" 1 John iv. 10. Though God love us not in our sin and misery before our conversion, so far as in that state to justify us, and adopt us, and take pleasure in us, or have communion with us in the Spirit, yet doth he so far love us in that state, as to redeem us by the blood of Christ, and tender us his salvation, and to bring in his chosen effectually to entertain his offer. And thus "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us; for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, and commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" Rom. v. 6. 8. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" John xv. 13. What was the Son of God, but love incarnate? Love born of a Virgin, Love coming down from heaven to earth, and walking in flesh among the miserable, seeking and saving that which was lost. Was it not Love that spoke those words of life, those comfortable promises, those necessary precepts, those gracious encouragements which the Gospel doth abound with? Was it not Love itself that went preaching salvation to the sons of death, and deliverance to the captives, and offered to bind up broken hearts? Luke iv. 18. Was it not Love that invited the heavy-laden; Matt. xi. 28. And that sent even to the highways, and the hedges to compel men to come in, that his house may be filled; Matt. xxii. 9, 10. Luke xiv. 23. Was it not Love itself, that went up and down healing and doing good; that suffered them for whom he suffered, to scorn him, and spit upon him, and buffet him, and condemn him; that being reviled, reviled not again; that gave his life an offering for sin, and died and prayed for them that murdered him? No wonder if the Gospel be it that teacheth us to call God by the name of Love itself; 1 John iv. 8. For it is the Gospel that hath most fully revealed him to be so. No wonder if the Gospel do so frequently and importunately require us to love one another, and even to lay down our lives for Christ, and for one another, when it hath given us such a ground and motive, and president for our love. He that seeth the true face of redemption, and understandeth, and savoureth the Gospel, and the grace of Christ, must needs see most cogent reasons for such duties; 1 John

iv. 7—12. “ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God : and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God ; he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us.” So 1 John iii. 10, 11. 14. 16—18. No wonder if, by this love, we know that we are translated from death to life ; and if by it the children of God be known from the children of the devil ; 1 John iii. 10, 11. 14. For love is the very nature and image of our Father. No wonder if this be the new commandment, which had newly such a powerful motive, and president : and no wonder if it be the great distinguishing character, by which all men shall know that we are the disciples of Christ ; John xiii. 35. When he had set us such a copy, and taught us this lesson by such effectual means, writing it out for us in lines of blood, even of his own most precious blood, and shedding it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

But if we should come down to the particular benefits of Christ’s death, and see what love is manifested in them, even in our calling, our justification, our adoption or sanctification, our preservation, and our everlasting glorification, we should find ourselves in an ocean that hath neither banks nor bottom ; and when we have fathomed as far as we can, we must be contented to stand and admire it, and to say with the beloved apostle, “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God !” 1 John iii. 1.

And this is the blessed employment of the saints, which they are called to by the Gospel, to live in the participation and consideration, and admiration of this wondrous love, that “ Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and so being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God ;” Ephes. iii. 17—19. And withal, “ to be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour ;” Eph. v. 1, 2. “ And to love without dissimulation ;” Rom. xii. 9, 10. “ Even from a pure heart fervently ;” 1 Pet. i. 22. “ That we love as brethren, being compassionate, pitiful, and courteous ; not

rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing ; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing ;" 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9. " And that we keep ourselves in the love of God," (Jude 21.), " that nothing may be able to separate us from it ;" Rom. viii. 35—37. And if we thus imitate our heavenly pattern, " the God of love and peace will be with us ;" 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And thus I have shewed you the principal ends of the undertaking of Christ in the work of our redemption, especially as they are attained directly by his cross and resurrection.

(6.) Another end also is apparent in the Scripture ; which is the glorifying of God's rewarding justice, together with his mercy in the salvation of his elect. This end he partly attaineth here : (God hath his ends continually.) In this life his servants have much of his mercy ; and the beginnings of their reward in the beginning of their salvation ; but the fulness is hereafter in their glorification. All his promises he performeth in their seasons. Even in the present pardon of our sins he honoureth his faithfulness and justice ; 1 John i. 9. His faithfulness in making good his promise, and his justice in rewarding the performers of the condition, and giving what his promise had made their due ; that so men may even here in part " discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not ; while they see God's esteem of his people as his jewels, and spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him ;" Mal. iii. 17, 18. " The King of Zion is just, having salvation ;" Zech. ix. 8. " The righteousness of God is manifested in our justification ;" Rom. iii. 21, 22. " Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference ; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ;" Rom. iii. 25, 26.

But it is most eminently at judgment, and in the world to come, that this remunerative justice with mercy will be glorified. " When Christ shall come (purposely) to be glorified

in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," (not only in himself, but in them), and that because they were believers; 2 Thess. i. 10. When "we have fought the good fight, and finished our course, and kept the faith, we shall find that there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give us, and all that love his appearing at that day;" 2 Tim. iv. 8. He will justify and applaud them before all the world, yea, and judge them to everlasting life, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. I will make thee ruler over many things; even because they had been faithful in a little;" Luke xix. 17. Matt. xxv. 21. 23. Because they shewed their love to him in his members, he will say to them, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; Matt. xxv. 34—36. He that now commandeth us to say to the righteous, "It shall be well with him," (Isa. iii. 10.), will in righteousness cause it then to be well with him. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;" Matt. xiii. 43. And the righteousness and mercy of their Father shall as conspicuously and gloriously shine in them. For it is a day appointed for the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds:" Rom. ii. 5, 6. "The present faith and patience of the saints in all the persecutions and tribulations which they endure, is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that they may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they suffer. It being a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled, rest with the saints;" 2 Thess. i. 5—7. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness;" Psal. xi. 7. "And in righteousness will he judge the world;" Acts xvii. 31. Rev. xix. 11. And, therefore, "in the keeping of his word there is a great reward;" Psal. xix. 11. Yea, a cup of water given in love to him, shall not be unrewarded; Matt. x. 41, 42. "To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward;" Prov. xi. 18. If in this life men are forced to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth;" Psal. lviii. 11. Much more when we receive the reward of the inheritance;" Col. iii. 24. This causeth the saints to forsake the pleasures of sin, because

they have respect to the recompence of reward ; Heb. xi. 29. This is that that maketh them rejoice and be exceeding glad in their persecutions, because that great is their reward in heaven. And, therefore, it is that they cast not away their confidence, because it hath great recompence of reward ; Heb. x. 25. If we let no man beguile us of our reward, (Col. ii. 18.), and if we look to ourselves that we lose not those things that we have wrought, we shall receive a full reward ; 2 John viii. For the Lord hath said, “ Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be ; Rev. xxii. 12.

(7.) Another end of Christ’s undertaking in this blessed work, is, the complacency and glory of God in the love and praise, and service of his redeemed ones ; in some measure here, but in perfection when they are perfected. Sin had made us unserviceable to God. And bringeth us back into a fitness for his service. He disposeth us Godward by faith and love. And he hath “ redeemed us from our iniquity, and purifieth to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;” Tit. ii. 14. “ To which he createth us, that we should walk in them ;” Ephes. ii. 10. And with such sacrifice God is well-pleased ; Heb. xiii. 16. Phil. iv. 18. “ The blood of the covenant” was, therefore, shed, “ to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, who worketh in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight ;” Heb. xiii. 20, 21. “ And this must be our care, to walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing, being fruitful in in every good work ;” Col. i. 10. “ And then whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandment, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight ;” 1 John iii. 22. See 1 Thess. i. Heb. xi. 6. Rom. viii. 8. 2 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 32. Heb. xi. 5.

But principally when we are glorified, and fitted by our perfection for the perfect love and praises of God, then will God perfectly take pleasure in us, and in our love and praise. The glory of the new Jerusalem and the harmony of everlasting praise and thanksgiving will be his delight. “ He will rejoice over us with joy, he will rest in his love ; he will joy over us with singing ;” Zeph. iii. 17.

(8.) Another end of Christ’s undertaking this blessed work, is, the everlasting glory of God which shall shine forth in the glorified manhood of the Redeemer, and the

everlasting complacency that God will have in him, for his own perfection, and the work that he hath wrought.

Though Christ had no need to suffer for any sin or want of his own, yet was it his personal dignity, dominion, and everlasting glory, as well as our salvation, that was intended by him and by the Father in this work, and which he was to receive as the reward of his performances; Rom. xiv. 7. Phil. ii. 8—10. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Heb. i. 3, 4. 6. Eph. i. 22. Nay, if we may make comparisons, this seemeth the highest part of God's end in the sending of his Son. As there is no part of all the works of God to be compared to the person of the Redeemer, so consequently there is none in which the glory of God will shine forth so admirably and illustriously as in Christ. If on earth the heavenly voice bear witness that it was in "him that the Father was well-pleased," (Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. xii. 18.) which was uttered both at his baptism, and his transfiguration, when his disciples saw a glimpse of his glory, and he was the "chosen servant of God, in whom his soul delighted; Isa. xlii. 1. much more is it apparent, that in his heavenly glory he will be the Father's everlasting pleasure and delight: and in him, and by him, and for the work that he hath wrought, the redeemed in glory will honour him for ever; Rev. v. 9. "He is the head of the body, the church, the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;" Col. i. 17—19. And, therefore, in him the glory of God will shine in fulness, and he shall have the preeminence in the Father's everlasting love. When Christ prayed (John xii. 28.), "Father, glorify thy name," he was answered by a voice from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again:" even in the Son that thus desired it. He hath done it on earth, and he will do it again more perfectly in heaven. "He hath glorified the Son, that the Son also may glorify him;" John xvii. 1. As he "glorified his Father on earth, and finished the work which he gave him to do," so the Father hath now glorified him with himself, that in his glory he may be yet more glorified; John xvii. 4, 5. In his transfiguration his face did shine as the sun; John xvii. 2. And in his appearance to Paul, his shining light did cast him blindfold and trembling on the earth; Acts ix.

4.6. It was Stephen's encouragement to the suffering of his martyrdom to see the glory of God, and Jesus standing on God's right hand ; Acts vii. 55, 56. When John saw him on the Lord's day in the Spirit, he beheld his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like burning brass in the furnace, and his voice was as the sound of many waters, and in his right hand were the stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was the sun that shineth in his strength ; Rev. i. 14—16. His voice also did proclaim his glory, "I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead ; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death ; ver. 17, 18. It was the Lord of glory that was crucified ; 1 Cor. ii. 8. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, (1 Tim. iii. 16.), where he is glorified with the Father in the praises of the saints ; Rev. xii. 13. The glory in the holy mount was great at the giving of the law ; but it was no glory to that of the Gospel administration, (2 Cor. iii. 7. 10.), much more to that of the glorified Redeemer, who hath overcome, and is set down with the Father in his throne ; Rev. iii. 21. Yea, the glory that will be given to God for ever, will be through Jesus Christ ; Rom. xvi. 17.

And indeed it is a very great question whether we shall immediately see the essence of God in heaven, or only see him in the glorified Redeemer ; and whether Christ will not then be the Mediator of our fruition, as he was here the Mediator of acquisition. But certain we are, that God will be everlastingly pleased and glorified in the person of the Redeemer, as well as in the church which is his body.

(9.) And reductively it may be said to be God's end in this blessed work, that he may more fully demonstrate his vindictive justice, according to the Gospel, or law of the Redeemer, upon them that finally reject his grace, than it would have been manifested on the terms of the law of the creation on Adam and his offspring. Though Christ came not into the world (primarily) to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved ; yet was it his purpose that unbelievers that love darkness rather than light should fall under the special condemnation ; John iii. 18, 19. And that they should not "see life, but the wrath of God should abide upon them ;" ver. 36. God would not so much

as permit them to reject his salvation, but that he knows how he may be no loser by them : “ He suffereth with much patience the vessels of wrath, to make his wrath and power known ;” Rom. ix. 22. The mouths of the condemned will be utterly stopped, and they will be left speechless when they are judged on terms of grace, much more than they would have been if they had been judged only by the first law : when they see Christ and heaven that was offered them, and remember their wilful and obstinate contempt of them, their own consciences and tongues shall justify God, and confess that he is righteous in the most dreadful of his judgments. “ If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall they escape that neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and then was confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost ;” Heb. ii. 3, 4. And “ if they escaped not, that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not they escape that turn away from him that speaketh from heaven : for our God is a consuming fire ;” Heb. xii. 25. 29. So much of the ends of Christ’s undertaking in our redemption.

In which you may see that there are divers things which demonstrate the glory of the forementioned attributes of God, in this Gospel dispensation. (1.) It shineth forth in the person of the Redeemer as he was on earth, in his nature and wonderful conception, and his perfections. (2.) And it also shineth forth in the actions of his life, overcoming the world, and the devil, and perfectly fulfilling the law of God : so that the image of his Father did shine forth in his conversation. (3.) And also in his death and sufferings was the Father glorified, as I shewed before. (4.) And also in the most wise and holy frame of those laws by which the grace of the Mediator is conveyed, and the church governed. (5.) And by the image of God, by the impress of those laws on the souls of his saints, and by the holiness of their lives, the glory of God is also demonstrated. (6.) As also by the justifying sentence of the judge, and the glorious reward bestowed on the faithful. (7.) And by the condemning sentence and execution on the ungodly, in whom vindictive justice will be honoured. (8.) And in the perfection of the

individual saints, and their perfect love and praise. (9.) And in the saints as embodied in the heavenly Jerusalem, the glory of which will be the glory of God. (10.) And principally in the blessed person and work of the Redeemer. In all these will God's glory shine forth for ever.

Quest. But to whom is it that God doth thus demonstrate his glory?

Ans. 1. To the saints in this life, in that degree as is suited to a state of grace, and the condition of a traveller that lives by faith. We are apt to look upward, and long after fuller revelations of the heavenly kingdom and mystery, and marvel that God will not shew himself more fully to his saints on earth. Fain we would know more of God and Christ, and the life to come; and it is oft matter of some temptation to us, that God doth not satisfy these desires, but leaveth them in so much darkness, that are willing of his light. But this is because we do not consider how much of glory consisteth in the light; and that grace is more in the desires of it than in the possession: and if we should have as much of it as we desire, it were but to bring down heaven to earth. Means must be suited to their ends: God will discover to us so much of his glory as may quicken our desires, and keep alive our hope, and patience, and endeavours; but not so much as shall satisfy us, and answer our expectations: for heaven is not here. We must not carry our home about with us, but travel towards it, that we may reach it at the last.

2. God doth even now demonstrate the glory of his fore-mentioned attributes, in the work of redemption, not only to his saints, but to the angels of heaven. The consideration of this hath often satisfied me, when I have been tempted to wonder at the work of redemption, that God should so far condescend as to be incarnate, and make such glorious discoveries of himself, and yet that so few in the world should take notice of it, and he should have from men so little of the honour that he seemeth by his preparations to expect. But the most part of the world did never once see the glory that shineth to them in the Redeemer. But God hath another world besides this, and other creatures besides man, in all likelihood incomparably more numerous (perhaps thousands for one) and certainly more excellent. And though Christ did assume the nature of angels, and came

not to redeem them that needed no Redeemer, yet may the lustre of this work of redemption appear to the angels more clearly than to man ; and God may have a thousand-fold more glory from them that are but the spectators and admirers, than from us in our present darkness, that are yet possessors. As we that are here on earth do look upon and admire the glory of the sun, which is as it were in another world, and out of our reach ; so the angels much more may gaze upon the glory of the Son of God, admire the Lord in the work of our redemption though they were not the redeemed ones : so that unto them doth God shine forth by it in his excellencies.

Perhaps you will say, ‘ That cannot be ; because this is but seeing him in a glass ; when the angels see him face to face, and immediately behold his blessed essence ; or else how can the saints expect that beatifical vision ? ’ To which I answer ; First, that I am uncertain whether seeing face to face be an immediate intuition of the essence of God, or only such a sight of his glory in those emanations, that are as appropriated to the place or state of bliss. God’s essence is every where ; but that glory is not every where : and so I know not whether our present knowledge be not called enigmatical, and as in a glass, comparatively to that glory prepared for the saints. But, secondly, I answer that certain I am that God is demonstrated to his angels in the Redeemer, yea, in the church itself, which is the subject of his grace, and that they are both affected, and employed about us accordingly. He that spoiled principalities, and powers, and openly triumphed over them, and by death overcame him that had the power of death ; Col. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14. and had so much to do against the evil angels as enemies, no doubt is joyfully observed by the good angels. And he that is set so “ far above principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this world, or that which is to come ; ” (Ephes. i. 21.) and is “ gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him ; ” (1 Pet. iii. 22.) no doubt is honoured and admired by angels. And indeed it is expressly said, “ Let all the angels of God worship him ; ” Heb. i. 6. And what are they all but “ ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ? ” Heb. i. 14. And therefore sent forth

by Jesus Christ, the Lord of saints. Which makes some think that the title of angels was never given to any of these spirits, till the Mediator's undertaking, and that it was only as they were his deputed messengers, or servants, for the ends of that undertaking. Sure we are, they attended his birth with their acclamations, and his life and sufferings (as far as was meet) with their service, and that they are deputed to bear his servants in their hands, that they dash not their foot against a stone ; that they are ascending, and descending, and are present with the churches in their holy worship, and that they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner ; and that the least of Christ's servants, have their angels beholding the face of God ; and that the law was given by their disposition or ordination, and they attend the departing souls of believers ; and that they contend against evil spirits for our good, and are encamped about us, and that they shall attend the Lord at his coming to judgment, and be his glorious retinue and instruments in the work ; and that they are numbered with us, as members of the same heavenly Jerusalem, and that we shall be like or equal to them ; Luke ii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 11. Luke xxii. 43. Acts x. 6, 7. 22. Psal. xxxiv. 7. xci. 11. Matt. xiii. 39. 41. xvi. 27. xxiv. 31. xxv. 31. xxvi. 53. Luke xvi. 22. Matt. xviii. 10. 2 Thess. i. 7. Luke xx. 36. Mark xii. 25. Acts vii. 65. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 22. 2 Pet. ii. 11. Luke xv. 10, John i. 51. Yea, men must be either confessed or denied, owned or disowned before the angels ; Luke xii. 8, 9. See Rev. xix. 18. iii. 5. But if all this seem not sufficient to persuade you that the angels are so far interested in the affairs of God about the redeemed, as to behold and admire him in his blessed work, take notice of the express affirmations of the Scriptures ; (1 Pet. i. 12.) " Which things the angels desire to look into." And why, but to see and admire the wisdom, and power, and goodness, and mercy, and justice of God, shining forth in the Redeemer ? If this be not plain enough, mark well those words, Ephes. iii. 10. " To the intent that now unto the principalities, and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." You see here that the church of the redeemed is that admirable looking-glass, which God hath set up to this very intent, that his angels may in it or by it behold the manifold wisdom of God ; yea, and that

upon the full revelation of Christ by the Gospel, they saw that which did more fully inform, and illuminate them. No doubt but the very work of the creation, yea, of this inferior world, that are made for the habitation and use of man, are far better known to angels than to man: for we know but little of what we daily see and use; and consequently it is by angels more than men, that God is beheld, admired, and glorified in them. And if it be so in these works of creation, we may well say it is so in the works of redemption.

3. But when we are perfected in glory, then we ourselves shall clearly see the glory of this mystery, and of God therein. As it is not till we come to heaven that we shall have the fullest benefits of redemption, so is it not till then, that we shall have the fullest understanding of it, and God have his fullest praises for it. As we are here but sowing the seed of our own glory, which we must reap in the everlasting fruition of God; so God is here but sowing those seeds of his praise and glory, which he will eternally reap by his blessed work. Do not therefore judge of the ends and fruits of Christ's undertakings, by what you see him attain on earth, but by what he shall attain in heaven, when he hath fully seen the travail of his soul to his satisfaction, and hath presented the whole church without spot unto God; and when the glorious marriage of the Lamb, with the heavenly Jerusalem is solemnized, and the kingdom delivered up to the Father; Isa. liii. 11. Eph. v. 27. Rev. xix. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 24. It will be another manner of conceiving which we shall have in heaven of this blessed work; when we see the face of our glorified Lord, and fully possess the fruits of his redemption, than this is that we have now by our weak believing. We shall then have another manner of sight of the wisdom, and power, and love, and justice that appear to man, in the face of Christ, than now we have.

4. Yea, the tormenting discoveries of the glory of redemption to the condemned rejectors of it, shall also contribute to the glory of God.

You see then that this work hath most glorious ends; which I have mentioned the more largely, both to remove their temptations that are apt to think that it was an unnecessary thing, and the less regardable, and to teach men the true value of it, by shewing them the true ends.

For the former, I say, there was no necessity that God

should make the world, and reveal his power, and wisdom, and goodness, in this excellent frame, but what did suppose the freewill of God the original cause. Will you therefore say, that the creation is vain; and undervalue God's admirable works, in which he thus revealeth himself to the intellectual creatures? So here; we confess that there could be no necessity of redemption, but what was originally derived from the will of God; (though a necessity 'ad finem' there was for the constitution of things, upon supposition of what went before the undertaking.) But yet shall we undervalue so glorious a work, in which the Divine perfections do so fully reveal themselves to the world?

And I say the more of this, because I do observe that it is the not apprehending the high and excellent ends of redemption, that makes it so much slighted, and consequently tempteth many to infidelity. For the ends and uses do set the value on the means. That is of little worth, that is to little purpose, and doth but little good. If men understood more the ends of redemption, and how much God doth shine forth in the world, in the person, and life, and laws, and works of the Son of God, they would then live in the admiration of it, and be always searching and prying into it, and desire to know nothing but God in Christ crucified, and account all things else but as loss and dung for this excellent knowledge. But, alas! the most do scarce discern any higher ends of Christ, or other use of him, than to save themselves from hell; and for want of faith, and through humiliation, they have but little sense of that: and therefore no wonder if the Redeemer be neglected, and God denied the honour of the work.

So much of this second point, the reasons and ends of Christ's undertaking. I shall purposely be shorter on the rest.

3. The third point to be understood concerning our Redeemer, is, What he hath done and suffered for mankind, and wherein his redeeming work consisted, both as to the general and special part. Should I stand on these at large, I must needs be voluminous; and therefore I shall but briefly recite them for your remembrance.

(1.) The first thing that Christ did for the saving of the world, was his interposing between offending man, and the wrath of God; and so preserving the world from that des-

truction, which the execution of the violated law would have procured : undertaking then to become the seed of the woman, and so to break the serpent's head ; and revealing this grace by slow degrees, till the time of his coming.

(2.) And then when the fulness of time was come, he was made man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, and so the " Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, who beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ;" John i. 14. Thus God was manifested to men in the flesh ; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

(3.) And as he was perfectly holy in his nature without any stain or guilt of original sin ; so was he perfectly holy in his life, and never broke the least command of God in thought, word, or deed. Never could any convince him of sin ; John viii. 46. He fulfilled the law of nature, which all the world was under, and the Mosaical law which the Jews were under, and the special law that was given to himself as Mediator, and was common to no other creature in the world.

And thus he performed these excellent works. (1.) By the fulfilling of all righteousness he pleased the Father, always accomplishing his will ; and so did much of the work of a Saviour, in meriting for us ; Matt. iii. 15. v. 17. John viii. 22. Matt. xii. 18. xvii. 5. Rom. v. 19. " For such an highpriest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners ; Heb. vii. 26.

2. He hath conquered the tempter, that conquered us. And therefore did he purposely yield himself to such sore temptations ; Matt. iv. that his victory might be glorious, and the second Adam might overcome him that had overcome the first. And thus he hath done much to the rescue of the captivated.

3. Hereby also he hath overcome the world, which overcame the first Adam and his posterity : he trampled upon its seeming glory ; he neglected and despised its baits and allurements ; he went through all its cruel persecutions and oppositions, so that the world now as well as the devil, are conquered things. By which he hath made way for the victory of his followers, and given them ground of great encouragement ; John xvi. 33. " Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Yea, I may say in a sort, he hath overcome the flesh also. For though Christ had no corrupted

flesh as we have to contend with, yet had he a natural and sensitive appetite, which the command of God did forbid him to fulfil. And therefore when innocent nature desired that the cup might pass from him, and abhor death by a simple averseness; yet perfect holiness permitted not this to proceed to a refusal by the comparing intellect, and choosing or refusing will; but saith, "Not my will, but thine be done." And when Christ was weary and hungry, the desire of food and rest by the sensitive appetite was no sin; but when the work of God forbade the fulfilling of such desires, he still denied them.

(4.) Hereby also he hath set us a perfect copy and pattern of obedience, and is become our example, whom we must endeavour to imitate. For he knew that it is the most effectual teaching, to do it by words and deeds together. It is a great help to us, when we do not only hear his voice, but see also which way he hath gone before us. When he saith, "Learn of me," he directs us not only to his words, but to himself, who was "meek and lowly;" Matt. xi. 28.

(5.) Moreover Christ received of the Father fulness of the Spirit, and power, for the benefit of the redeemed: that he might be meet to be the Head and treasury of the church, and to shower down the streams of grace upon his members and when all power was given him in heaven and earth, he might be fitted to the following application of his benefits, and to rule, and support, and defend his people.

(6.) Moreover he was pleased himself to become a preacher of the Gospel of salvation, not to all the world, but principally as a minister of the circumcision, that is, the Jews; Rom. xv. 8. He that purchaseth salvation, condescended also to proclaim it. The preaching of the Gospel is a work that Christ thought not himself too good for, sometimes to many, sometimes to one or two, as he had opportunity; often with tears, and always with earnestness and compassion, did he go about doing good, and seeking the lost, and healing the diseased, and calling men to faith and repentance, and offering them the grace and life which he purchased.

(7.) And he was pleased also to seal up his doctrine by his works, casting out devils, healing all diseases, raising the dead, and working divers other miracles, to assure them that he came from God, and did his work, and revealed his will, that so the world might have no excuse for their unbe-

lief; but that they that would not believe upon any other account, might yet believe him for the sake of his works; John iii. 2. Acts ii. 22. Heb. ii. 4. John v. 36. x. 25. 38. xiv. 11, 12. xv. 24.

(8.) Besides all this, he gave up himself to a life of suffering, being despised by his creatures whom he came to redeem, and destitute voluntarily of fleshly pleasures, and of that riches and worldly provision that might procure it. He was a man of sorrows, afflicted from his youth, persecuted from the cradle; he gave his cheeks to the smiters, and his person to be made the scorn of fools; he was crowned with thorns, spit upon and buffeted, and having sweat water and blood, in his agony in the garden, he was hanged on a cross where thieves were both his companions and revilers, where they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, pierced his blessed body with a spear, and put him to a shameful, cursed death. But he endured the cross, despising the shame, and gave up himself thus a sacrifice for sin, and bore our transgressions, that we might be healed by his stripes; and having ransomed us by his blood, he was buried as an offender, continuing for a time in the power of the grave; Isa. liii. throughout, Matt. xxvi. xxvii. Heb. xii. 2. All this he consented to undergo, (though he consented not to the sin of them that did inflict it,) for he laid down his life, it was not taken from him against his will; John x. 17, 18.

(9.) Having thus paid the price of our reconciliation to God, the third day he rose again from the dead, though soldiers watch his grave; because he had foretold them that he would rise on the third day, yet were they soon daunted by the glory of an angel, that came and rolled away the stone. And so Christ made known his Divine power and victory, and the finishing of his work: and as by death he overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, (Heb. iii. 14.) so by his resurrection he triumphed over death itself. For how should the grave detain the innocent, and death overcome the Lord of life? This was the glorious day of triumph; in remembrance of this he appointed the Lord's day to be observed by the church. The resurrection of Christ was the confusion of all the powers of darkness; the great argument to confirm the truth of his doctrine, and prove his Godhead to the unbelieving world.

(10.) Being risen, he more fully revealed his Gospel, and

sent forth his apostles and disciples, to proclaim the offers of life to the world, and settle the churches in a holy order, when they had gathered them, and to ordain such ministers to succeed them, as might carry on his work to the end of the world; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And thus he is the faithful Lawgiver to the church.

(11.) When he had abode thus forty days on earth, he ascended up into heaven, while his disciples stood by, and gazed after him; (Acts i. 9, 10.) and there hath taken possession in our nature, advancing it to the Father's right hand in glory, which was by sin depressed so low in misery. And so he is gone to prepare a place for us, leaving us a certain word of promise that he "will come again, and take us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also;" John xiv. 2, 3. And as "our life now is hid there with Christ in God, so when he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory;" Col. iii. 3, 4.

(12.) Being ascended, he manifested his power and his truth in sending down the Holy Ghost upon his disciples, enabling them to do such works as he had done, and such as were necessary to convince the unbelieving world, and to conquer the opposing wisdom and power of the flesh; enabling them to speak in variety of languages, which they had never before learned; as also to understand and powerfully preach the mysteries of the Gospel, to confirm their doctrine by miracles, healing the lame, the blind, the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and conquering the resistance of principalities and powers, in seeming weakness, and in a contemptible garb. Not to speak now of the sanctifying work of the same Spirit, on them and on the rest of the church.

(13.) Lastly, In this glory Christ intercedeth for us, and is our High-priest in the heavens with God, living for ever, procuring and conveying to us the mercies which we need upon the account of his sacrifice; ruling his church, and preserving them; succeeding his cause and servants; restraining and subduing his enemies and ours; and will perfect his work at the day of his coming to judgment. So much of the works of Christ.

4. The fourth point to be understood concerning our redemption, is, The nature and worth of the benefits that are procured for us. Which though you may gather much from what is said, and the full handling of them would be a lar-

ger work than is suitable to my present ends, yet such a brief recital I shall here give you, as my ends require.

In general, we have all from Jesus the Mediator that is worth the having; even all the blessings of this present life, and of the life to come. As we lost our right to all by sin, so we have our restored right by Christ alone, who came to destroy sin, and its effects. Had not he interposed, we might have had materially life, and natural faculties, and other things which now are mercies; but not as mercies, but as the requisites to our deserved punishment: even as the devils have their being and natural perfections to sustain them in their sufferings. Nature itself, so far as good, and all natural blessings are now of grace: and that not only of grace as they were to Adam, which was mercy without proper merit; but of Gospel grace procured by Christ, which is mercy contrary to merit. It is no sounder doctrine to say, that God doth without the merit of his Son bestow our common forfeited mercies, either on the elect or others, than that he giveth us his saving grace without it. As all things are delivered into the hands of Christ; (John xiii. 3.) so none can receive any good but from his hands. To give mercies to men that forfeit them, and deserve misery, is so far to pardon their sin; for to remit the sin, is to remit the punishment. But the Scripture is not acquainted with any pardon of sin, but what is on the account of the merits of Christ. They that deny this mercy of God, in giving even to the ungodly such a measure of forgiveness, do speak against the daily and hourly experience of all the world; and therefore need no other confutation.

More particularly, (1.) Christ having taken the human nature into union with the Divine, our nature is thereby inconceivably advanced, and brought nigh to God.

(2.) Having fulfilled the law and offered himself a sacrifice for sin, God's justice, and wisdom, and holiness, and goodness, are admirably demonstrated: and this sacrifice is both satisfactory and meritorious on our behalf; Heb. i. 3. 2 Cor. v. 19. Heb. ix. 26. x. 12.

(3.) The world, and the devil, and death, and the grave, are conquered by him, in preparation to our conquest.

(4.) The Lord Jesus himself being risen, and justified, hath received all power in heaven and in earth; Matt. xxviii. 19. And is enabled to do all things that are necessary for

his further ends. As the Redeemer he is become Lord of ourselves, and of all we have ; and he is made the Sovereign Ruler of all, having full power to relax the law that cursed, and to deal with the world on terms of grace.

(5.) Accordingly he hath kept off the stroke of the rigorous justice of God, and hindered the strict execution of the law of works, and giveth still abundance of forfeited mercies to the sinful world, keeping them from deserved torments, while he is treating them on terms of life.

(6.) He hath made a universal deed of gift, of Christ and life to all the world, on condition that they will but accept the offer ; 1 John v. 10—12. John i. 11, 12. iii. 16—19. In this testament, or promise, or act of oblivion, the sins of all the world are conditionally pardoned, and they are conditionally justified and reconciled to God.

(7.) He hath given apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to proclaim this act of grace to the world, commanding them to go into all the world, and preach this Gospel to every creature, and promise salvation to all that by faith will become his true disciples ; Mark xvi. 16. Matt. xxviii. 20. 22. So that their promulgation is universal.

(8.) Though his servants have most lamentably neglected their duty, and have not gone abroad in the world, to divulge the Gospel according to his will ; imagining that this work had been proper to the apostles ; and though the nations have sinfully neglected a due inquiry after this blessed light, yet hath he not left himself among them without witness, but hath given them some dawning of the day, or some moonlight in the reflections of evangelical truth, who have not seen the sun itself. Much mercy they have had notwithstanding their transgressions ; and while they served devils, they have been provided for by God, “ in whom they live, and move, and have their being ;” “ doing them good, and giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness ;” and this to teach them, “ that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of them ;” Acts xiv. 17. xvii. 27, 28. “ And that which may be known of God, is manifest among them, for God hath shewed it to them ; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-

head : so that they are without excuse ;” Rom. i. 19, 20. By experience they may find, that God dealeth not now in rigor of justice, but on terms of grace, and that sin is not now unpardonable ; and they should know that the “ goodness of God leadeth men to repentance ;” Rom. ii. 4.

(9.) As the Gospel conditionally pardoneth all their sins, and offereth them everlasting life, so it containeth the clearest reasons and most effectual motives, to persuade them to accept the offer. It affordeth them most excellent precepts and instructions, and exhortations, and other helps to bring them to a willingness, that salvation may be theirs.

(10.) To which also is added abundance of outward, providential helps, to further the working of the Gospel ; as seasonable afflictions and mercies of divers sorts.

(11.) And with these is usually concurrent some inward motions, and assistance of the Holy Ghost ; as knocking at the door, where he is not yet let in, and entertained.

(12.) And by their presence in the visible church, even the ungodly have many benefits in the ordinances, and instructions, and examples of the saints. All these (besides a resurrection) are the common effects of general redemption, and not appropriated to the elect.

Besides which there are others that the elect only do receive. As (1.) God is pleased by effectual grace to draw them to his Son, and make the Gospel successful to their conversion, insuperably teaching and changing them by his Spirit, and causing them to repent, and believe in Christ, and to perform the conditions of his forementioned promises. That love that brought the Lord on earth, that clothed him with flesh, that lifted him up upon the cross, doth stream forth in his season into the hearts of his elect, and toucheth them with a changing power, and winneth them to his Father and himself, and droppeth into them those heavenly principles, which will grow up in them to everlasting life.

(2.) Hereupon the soul believing in Christ is united to him, as a member of his body, even of his true catholic church ; and Christ is become the Head, the Husband, the Lord, the Saviour of that soul in a special sort. Christ himself is first given to us in these relations ; and from him as our Head, his following benefits are conveyed. “ He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life ; for this life is in the Son ;” 1 John v. 11, 12. He

is the vine, and we are the branches, and out of him we can do nothing; John xv. 1, 2, 5. As it was not we that purchased our own salvation, so it is not we, but Christ, that must have the keeping, and dispensing of the purchased benefits. "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell, and that he should be the Head over all things to his church," that it might by communication become his fullness; Col. i. 19. Ephes. i. 22, 23. He is our treasury, and from him we must have our continual supplies; for "with him the Father will give us all things;" Rom. viii. 32. And thus Christ will "dwell in our hearts by faith;" Ephes. iii. 17. and set up the kingdom of God within us.

(3.) Hereupon we have the pardon of all our sins; not only as to the temporal punishment, nor only as to the bestowing of temporal mercies, or common helps of creatures, and providences; for this is but a "winking at the days of our ignorance," (Acts xvii. 30.) in comparison of the pardon which afterward we receive. Nor is it only a conditional, or offered pardon; but it is an actual remission of the eternal,^f and of all the destructive, punishment. And thus we are justified from all that might be charged on us from the law, and accepted, and used as just by God. There is a kind of forgiveness that was promised to the sacrificers; Lev. iv. 20. 26. 31. 35. v. 10. 13. 16. 18. vi. 7. Numb. xv. 28. But as that was upon Christ's account, so it extended not to the pardon of the eternal punishment to any but true believers. He that was once crucified, "is exalted by God's right hand, a prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" Acts v. 31. "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses;" Acts xiii. 38, 39. When our eyes are open, and we "are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God," we then "receive remission of our sins;" Acts xxvi. 18. When we are "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ; in him we have then redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" Col. i. 13, 14. And "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin;" Rom. iv. 7. And now "who shall condemn us? It is God

that justifieth us : for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ;” Rom. viii. 1. 33, 34.

(4.) With this benefit doth concur, our reconciliation to God, and our adoption ; by which we are made his sons, and God is pleased to own us as our Father. For being one with Christ the Son of God, we are sons by him. For “ to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name ;” John i. 12. This is the wonderful love that the Father hath bestowed on those that were his enemies ; that they should not only be reconciled to him by the death of his Son, but also be called the sons of God ; Rom. v. 10. 1 John iii. 1. For he hath “ chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love ; having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ;” Ephes. i. 4—6. O what an unspeakable mercy is it to have the blessed God, whom we had so oft offended, to become our reconciled Father in Christ ! For it is not an empty title that he assumeth ; but he hath more abundant love to us, and tenderness of our welfare, than any title can make us understand.

(5.) And hereupon it doth immediately follow, that we have a right to the blessed inheritance of his sons, and are certain heirs of his heavenly kingdom ; Col. i. 12. For if “ sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ;” Rom. viii. 17. “ Being saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and justified by grace through Jesus Christ, we are made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life ;” Tit. iii. 5—7. “ Being begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us ;” 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

(6.) Withal, the Holy Ghost is given to us, not only to close us at first with Christ, but to take up his abode in us, as his temples, and to be the agent and life of Christ within us, and to do his work, and maintain his interest, and cleanse us of all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and sanctify us throughout, and to strive against, and conquer the flesh, and to keep

us by divine power through faith unto salvation ; 1 Cor. vi. 19. Gal. v. 17. 22. 2 Cor. vi. 1. 1 Pet. i. 5. For “ because we are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father ;” Gal. iv. 6. This Spirit of adoption which we receive doth “ bear witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God ;” Rom. viii. 15, 16. For “ if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his ;” Rom. viii. 9. By this Spirit is the spirit of the world cast out of us ; the spirit of pride, and of blindness, and of delusion, and hardheartedness, and of sensuality, and malice, and hypocrisy are cast out. By this is God’s image imprinted on our souls ; we are conformed to his blessed will ; “ we are made partakers of the Divine nature, being holy, as God is holy ; Col. iii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 4. 1 Pet. i. 16. Hereby also we are fitted for the service of God, to which before we were undisposed and unfit. O what an ease is it to the soul, to be free from so much of the burden of sin. What an honour is it to have the Spirit of God within us, and to have a nature so truly heavenly and divine ? How can it go ill with him that hath “ God dwelling in him, and that dwells in God ?” 1 John iv. 15.

(7.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, that we shall be actually employed in the special and nearest service of God, that on earth is to be performed. Let diseased souls desire idleness ; and swinish sinners take pleasure in the mire, and feed like ravenous beasts on carrion, or as dogs on dung. But the saints will ever rejoice in God, and take it for the most blessed life on earth, when they can do him the greatest service. Let his enemies that hate his service be weary of it, as if it were a toil or drudgery ; but his children will desire no sweeter work. They never think themselves so well as when they are most serviceable to their blessed Lord, though at the greatest cost and labour to the flesh. So sweet is God’s service, that the more of it we can do, the more is our pleasure, and honour, and content. Other work spendeth strength ; but this increaseth it. Other work must have recreation intermixed, but this is itself the most delightful recreation. Other service is undertaken for the love of the wages, but this is undertaken for the love of the master, and the work, and is wages itself to them that go through with it. For other service is but a means, and that to some inferior end ; but this is a means,

to the everlasting perfection, and blessedness of the soul; and such a means as containeth, or presently procureth, somewhat of the end. All the saints are even here “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they shall shew forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light: they are a holy priesthood, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9. Their very bodies are “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, in their reasonable service.” What a sweet work is it to live in the daily love of God; in his praises, in the hopes, and sweet forethoughts of everlasting joys. The world affordeth not such a Master, nor such a work.

(8.) Another of the precious benefits by Christ, is, The liberty of access in all our wants to God by Prayer, with a promise to be heard. The flaming sword did keep the way to the tree of life, till Christ had taken it down, and consecrated for us a new and living way, through the vail, which is his flesh. And now we have “boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; and, therefore, may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith;” Heb. x. 19, 20, 22. When worldlings may cry to their Baal in vain, the “righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their (hurtful) troubles.” O what a mercy is it in our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, to have a God, a faithful, merciful Father to go to, and make our moan to for relief! What a mercy is it, when our flesh and our hearts do fail us, when friends and worldly things all fail us, to have God for the rock of our hearts, of our portion; Psal. lxxiii. 26. When sickness begins to break these bodies, and earthly delights do all forsake us, and death calls us to come to our endless state, then to have a reconciled Father to go to, and crave his aid, upon the encouragement of a promise, and recommend our souls into his hand as to a faithful Creator, and our surest, dearest friend; this is a mercy that no man can well value, till they come to use it. To know every day, that as oft as ever we come to God, we are always welcome; and that our persons, and prayers are pleasing to him through his Son, what a mercy is it. One would think we should live joyfully, if we had but one such promise as this for faith to live upon: “Call upon me in the days of trouble, and I will deliver thee,

and thou shalt glorify me;" Psal. l. 15. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;" John xiv. 13, 14. No wonder if they be rich, that have so free access to such a treasure; and if they be safe that have access to so sure a help. For God is a very present help in trouble; Psal. xlv. 1.

(9.) Another precious benefit, is, That we have peace of conscience, or ground for it at the least, in our peace with God; and so may come to assurance of salvation, and may partake of the joy of the Holy Ghost. For in this peace and joy the kingdom of God doth much consist. When the chief cause of all our fear and sorrow is done away, what then is left to break our peace? When we have no cause to fear the flames of hell, nor the sting of death, or the appearance of our Judge, any further than to move us to make ready, what then should greatly trouble the soul? If God and heaven be not matter of comfort, I know not what is. If we saw a man, that had got many kingdoms, to be still sad, and dumpish, because he had no more, we would say, he were very ambitious, or covetous; and yet he might have reason for it. But if you have the love of God, and a title by promise to heavenly inheritance, and yet you are discontented, and God and glory is not enough for you, this is most unreasonable.

(10.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, Our spiritual communion with his church, and holy members. We do not only join with them in outward communion, but we unite our desires, and there is a harmony of affections. We are in the main of one mind and will, and way, and we jointly constitute the body of our Lord. "We are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant;" Heb. xii. 22—24. We are joined to that body, and have communion with it, which consisteth both of militant, and triumphant saints, and of the angels also. "We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,

in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord ; in whom we also are builded together, for a habitation of God, through the Spirit ; Ephes. ii. 19—22. And as in holy concord we serve the Lord, having one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one rule, the word of God, one mind, one heart, one work of holiness and righteousness in the main ; one hope, one heaven, the place of our expectations. So have we the fruit of the prayers of each other, and of all the church, and have the honour, the safety, and other benefits of being members of so blessed a society.

Yea, we have in this communion, the whole church obliged, and disposed according to their capacity to endeavour the good of every member. So that ministers and magistrates, yea, though they were apostles, and prophets, Paul, or Apollos, all are ours ; 1 Cor. iii. 22. Kings have their power for us, and for us they must use them. If we suffer, every member must be as forward to assist us, and if we want, to relieve us, according to their power, as if they suffered with us ; 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

Yea, the angels are our brethren (Rev. xxix. 9.) and fellow servants, yea, “ ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation ; Heb. i. 14.” To “ encamp about them, and to bear them in their arms,” rejoicing to behold their graces, and prosperity, as was shewed before.

(11.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, That “ All things shall work together for good ; Rom. viii. 28. When we are sanctified to God, all things are sanctified to us, to serve us for God, and help us to him. Every creature that we have to do with, is, as it were, another thing to the saints, than to other men. They are all wheels in that universal engine of grace, to carry us to salvation. The same things that are common mercies to others, are special to us, as proceeding from a special love, and being designed to a special use. As flesh-pleasing is the ultimate end of the ungodly, and all things are thereby debased, to be but means to that ignoble end ; so the pleasing and fruition of God, is the end of all the saints, and thereby all things that they have to do with, are advanced to the honour of being sanctified means to this most high and noble end, and as they are engaged to use them to this end, and consequently to

their own greatest advantage ; so God hath engaged himself to bless them in that holy use, and to cause them all by his gracious providence to co-operate to their good. Their greatest afflictions, the cruellest persecutions from the most violent enemies, our wants, our weaknesses, and death itself, all must concur to carry on this work. What then should a Christian fear, but sin ? How honourable, and how happy a life may he live, that hath all these assured for his service. And what causeless fears are they that use to afflict the servants of God, concerning their outward troubles, and necessities. What do we fear, and groan under, and complain of, but our Father's physic, and the means of our salvation ? If this one truth were but believed, and received, and used according to its worth, O what a life would Christians live !

(12.) The last, and greatest of our benefits by Christ, is, Resurrection, and our justification at the bar of God, and our reception into glory. This is the end of all, and therefore containeth all. For this Christ died ; for this we are Christians ; for this we believe, hope and labour ; for this we suffer, and deny ourselves, and renounce this world. Our bodies shall then be spiritual and glorious, no more troubled with infirmities, diseases or necessities. Our souls shall be both naturally and graciously perfected ; both in their faculties and qualities. We shall be brought nigh to God : we shall be numbered with the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and be members of that blessed society, and companions and equal with the angels of God : we shall for ever behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the Godhead ; and we shall have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God, the fullest love to him, and the sweetest rest, content and delight in him, that our created natures are capable of : we shall everlastingly be employed in this love, and delight, and in his praises with all the heavenly host : and the glory of God will shine forth in our glory, and the abundance of his goodness will be communicated to us : and he will be well-pleased with us, with our praises, with all that blessed society, and with our head : and this will endure to all eternity.

Christians, I have now named in a few words, those benefits by Christ, which the heart of man is not able to value, in any proportion to their inexpressible worth : I have named

that in an hour, which you will enjoy for ever. So much of our benefits by Christ.

5. The fifth point to be understood in the right knowledge of Christ, is, The terms on which he conveyeth his benefits to men, and how we must be made partakers of them.

And these mercies are of two sorts: 1. Common. 2. Proper to them that are heirs of salvation. The common are, 1. Those discoveries of grace, that are made even to heathens in the creatures, and the merciful providences of God. These are absolutely and freely bestowed in some measure on all, but in a greater measure upon some, as pleases the giver. 2. The supernatural, or instituted means of revealing Christ, and life to the world, and drawing them to a saving consent of faith. These are the Gospel written and preached, with other concomitant helps. The commission Christ hath given to his ambassadors, is to teach this Gospel to all the world, even to every (reasonable) creature, without exception or restriction. And it is absolutely and freely given, where it is given. But as to the providential disposal of the event, God causeth it not to be sent to all, but to whom he seeth meet.

The proper or special mercies are of two sorts: (1.) Some are physical inherent qualities, or performed acts. (2.) And some are adherent rights, or relations.

Of the former inherent sort, there are these three degrees: (1.) There is the first special work of vocation, conversion or regeneration, causing the sinner to repent and believe, and giving him the principle of spiritual life. (2.) There is the bestowing of the indwelling Spirit of God, and progressive sanctification of heart and life, and perseverance with victory. (3.) There is the perfecting of all this, in our glorious perfection in the life to come.

(1.) For the first of these, God hath not promised it conditionally or absolutely to any individual person that hath it not. He hath bound all to repent and believe, but hath not promised to make them do it: (only he hath revealed that there are certain persons so given to Christ, as that they shall be infallibly drawn to believe.) But he hath appointed certain means for the ungodly, which they are bound to use in order to their conversion; and if they will not use them, they are without excuse. If they will, they have very much encouragement from God, both [1.] In the nature of the

means, which are fitted to their ends, and are mighty to bring down all oppositions: and [2.] In the commands and institution of God; whose wisdom and goodness may easily resolve us, that he will not appoint us means in vain, nor set his creatures on fruitless labour: and [3.] Also from the issue; for no man can stand forth and say, Such an one did his best in the use of means, and yet could not attain the end, but fell short of the grace and glory of God.

The diseases of men's souls are wilfulness and blindness; the means of cure are the persuasions, with the revelations of the Gospel. Men have the natural powers of understanding and willing: but they want that right disposition which we call the habit, or moral power, which is no more than to say, They are habitually blind and wilful. It is so far from being unreasonable to teach and persuade men that are under such an impotency as this, that there is nothing in the world that doth more bespeak our teaching and persuasions; for this is the natural and instituted way to cure them, and give them power. What means of overcoming ignorance like teaching? And what means of overcoming habituated wilfulness, like persuasion, added to informing truths? We do not use to reason men out of a natural impotency, nor to persuade them to do that for which they have no faculties or object; but it is the very means of overcoming a moral impotency, and making men willing of the good which they rejected. And with this means doth God set in, and infallibly cause it to be effectual with his chosen. Thus no man cometh to the Son, except the Father draw him; and then for the two following degrees of holiness in our sanctification, and glorious perfection, God hath promised them to those that have this first degree. For the Spirit of holiness is promised to all that truly repent and believe, and salvation to all that are sanctified, and persevere. So that the right to these inheritance mercies, being a relation, is conveyed as other rights and relations, of which we are next to speak.

(2.) As the Spirit by the operation of the word upon the heart conveyeth the foresaid inherent benefits or qualities and acts, so the promise of grace, indited by Christ and the Spirit, doth as a deed of gift, or testament, or act of oblivion, bestow on us our rights and spiritual relations; and from

these they do result, as the immediate instrumental cause. Thus doth he give "power or right to as many as receive him, to become the sons of God;" John i. 12. Thus doth he give us pardon, justification, adoption, and our right to further grace and glory. And these promises are conditional; and our repenting and believing in Christ, is the condition. And therefore till conversion do bring us to repent and believe, we have no right to any of these benefits of the promise. And therefore though our repentance and faith be none of the proper cause of our justification, or right: yet the main work, in order to the procurement of these benefits, that is now to be done, is to persuade the sinner to repent and believe; to turn that he may live; for God's act of grace is past already, and the conditional pardon is granted long ago, and will effectually pardon us as soon as we perform the condition, and not before. Till then, we hinder the efficacy of the deed of gift; for unbelief and impenitency are true causes of men's condemnation, though faith and repentance be no proper causes of their salvation.

These promises being conditional, we cannot be assured of our part in the benefits, but by being assured that we perform the condition. By this you may see the nature of presumption; when men say, they believe that which never was promised; or believe that they have right to the blessings that are promised to others, and thus they believe that they shall have the benefits promised, when they perform not the conditions; all this is presuming, and not true believing. If men believe that God is reconciled to them, and will pardon them, and justify them, and save them, when they are unconverted, impenitent, unregenerate men; this is not indeed a believing of God, that hath never made them any such promise, nor ever told them any such matter, but the contrary; but it is a believing the false delusions of the devil and their own hearts. He that will claim any title to Christ, and pardon, and salvation, must have something to shew for it; yea, and something more than the most of the world have to shew; for the most shall be shut out. Every man, therefore that regardeth his salvation, must seriously ask his soul this question, 'What have I to shew for my title to salvation, more than the most of the world can shew? It is not saying, I hope to be saved, that will serve the turn, except I can give a reason of my hope. Thousands that lay

claim to salvation shall miss of it, because they have no title to it.' And that which you must have to shew, is this, A promise, or deed of gift on God's part, and the fulfilling of the condition on your part. God saith to all men, "Who-soever repenteth, believeth, or is converted, shall be saved." When you have found that you repent of all your sins, and truly believe, and are converted to God, then, and not till then, you may conclude that you shall be saved.

6. The sixth point to be understood and believed, concerning these benefits of Christ, is the infallible certainty of them. While men look on the promised glory to come, as on an uncertain thing, they will hardly be drawn to venture, and let go the profits and pleasures of the world to attain it; much less to part with life itself. The life of all our Christian motion, is the unfeigned belief of the truth of God's word, and specially of the unseen things of the world to come. Such as men's belief of heaven and hell is, such will be the bent of their hearts, and the course of their lives, and such and such they will be in yielding to sin, or in resisting it, and in all the service they do for God. As all men would take another course, if they did but see heaven and hell with their eyes; so all men would presently throw away their worldly, fleshly pleasures, and turn to God and a holy life, if they did but as thoroughly believe the joys and torments to come, as if they saw them. Flesh and blood can hardly judge of things, without the help of sense; and fleshly men take all things to be phantasms or nothings, that are not within the judgment of their senses. They must see it, or feel it, or taste it, or hear it; and believing is a way that hardly satisfies them; though it be God himself that they are to believe. Believing is trusting the credit of another; and we are naturally loath to trust to any but our eyes or other senses. We are so false ourselves, that we are ready to measure God by ourselves; and to think that he is a deceiver, because that we are such. And hence it is that the world is so ungodly that they venture on sin, and will not be at the cost and labour of a heavenly life; because they take the matters of the life to come, to be but uncertainties, and have not so true a belief of them, as might possess them with a deep apprehension of their reality. How should the word profit them, that mix it not with faith, (Heb. iv. 2.) unless by begetting faith itself? O what a change would a

sound belief of the Scriptures make in the world ! But having spoken so oft of this in other writings, I shall say no more of it now. So much of the knowledge of Christ.

11. I have shewed you the first part of this Direction, How Christ must be received understandingly, I now come to the second, which is, That he must be received heartily. As God must be beloved, so Christ must be believed in, with all the heart, and soul, and strength. If not with all in a perfect degree, (for that will not be till we come to heaven) yet with all in a prevalent degree. There are many convictions, and good meanings, and wishes, and purposes, which may proceed from common grace, and be found in those that never shall be saved : these may be called (analogically) faith, and love, and desire, as those that are found in the truly regenerate ; and yet the persons in whom they are found, may not fitly be called believers or lovers of God ; because a man is to be denominated from that in him which is predominant, and hath the chief power on his heart. The soul of man is not so simple as to move but one way : its state in this life is to stand between two differing competitors, God and the world, spirit and flesh ; and there is no man that is totally given up to either of them. No man is so good and spiritual, that hath not something in him that is bad and carnal ; and no man is so fully addicted to God, but the creature hath too much interest in his heart. Nor is there any man so given up to the creature, in whom God hath no manner of interest at all, in his estimation and affections ; if he indeed believe that there is a God. At least it is not so with all that are unconverted. Otherwise, 1. What is it that common grace doth, if it no whit dispose them towards God ? Certainly it would not else be grace. 2. And if this were not so, then we must say, that no unregenerate man hath any good in him, that is truly moral ; for if there be no interest of God in his mind or will, there can be no good in him. But this is contrary to Scripture and experience. It was undoubtedly some moral good, which Christ loved the man for, in Mark x. 21. who was not far from the kingdom of God. 3. Otherwise all men must be equally departed from God, which is contrary to experience. 4. Yea, all men must be as bad on earth (privately) as in hell ; which certainly is false. I may well say, that on earth there is some good in the worst ; much more in those

that are almost persuaded to be converted Christians. Many a thought of the goodness of God, and the necessity of a Saviour, and of the love of Christ, and of the joys of heaven, may be stirring and working in the minds of the unsanctified; but if they take not up the heart for Christ, the person is not a true believer. As the Gospel must be believed to be true, so Christ that is offered us in the Gospel as good, must be heartily and thankfully accepted accordingly: and the glory, the justification, reconciliation with God, and other benefits procured by him, and offered with him, must be valued and desired above all earthly, fleshly things. If you are convinced that sin is evil, as contrary to God, and hurtful to you, and hereupon have some mind to let it go, and some wishes that Christ would save you from it, and yet still have a love to it that is greater than your dislike; and the bent of your hearts is more for it, than against it, and your habitual desires are rather to keep than to leave it: this is not sanctification, nor a saving consent to be saved by Christ. If you have some convictions that holiness is good, as being the image of God, and pleasing to him, and necessary to your salvation, and so should have some mind of holiness on these grounds; yet if you have on the other side a greater averseness to it, because it would deprive you of the pleasures of your sin, and the habitual inclination of your will is more against it than for it; certainly this will not stand with true sanctification, of faith in Christ, to save you from the power of sin by his Spirit. Thousands deceive themselves, by misunderstanding some common passages, that are spoken to comfort afflicted consciences: viz. That the least true desires after grace, do prove the soul to be gracious. This is true, if you speak of the least desires, which are predominant in the soul; when our desire is more habitually than our unwillingness, and we thus prefer Christ before all the world, the least of this is an evidence of saving grace. But such desires as are subdued by the contrary desires; and such a will as is accompanied with a greater unwillingness, habitually; and such a faith, as is drowned in greater unbelief; these are not evidences of a saving change; nor can you justly gather any special comfort from them. He that hath more unbelief than belief, is not to be called a believer, but an unbeliever; and he that hath more hatred or dislike of God and holiness than love to them, is not to be cal-

led godly, but ungodly, nor a lover of God, but a hater of him. I am easily persuaded, that many of you that are ungodly could be contented that God be glorified, if his glory do not cross your carnal interest ; and so you desire God's glory even for itself, as that which is absolutely good in itself : but if your fleshly interest be so dear to you, that you will sacrifice God's glory to it, and had rather God were dishonoured than your fleshly interest contradicted, it is your flesh then that is made your God, and your chief end. It is not every wish, or minding of Christ, no, not to save you from sin as sin, that will prove you true believers : nor is it every minding of God, or love to him, no, not as one apprehended by you to be the chiefest good, and desirable for himself, as your end, that will prove indeed that you savingly love him ; as long as the contrary mind and will is habitually predominant in you. Such as the very habit and bent of a man's heart is, such indeed is the man. It is possible for a man, even a good man, to have two contrary ends and intentions, yea, ultimate ends ; as that which is desired for itself, and referred to nothing else, is called ultimate ; but it is not possible for him to have two principal, predominant ends. So far as we are carnal still, we make the pleasing of our flesh our ultimate end ; for doubtless we do not sin only by pleasing the flesh, as a means to God's glory ; nor only in the mischoosing of other means ; but yet this is none of our principal end, so far as men are truly sanctified. And because that is called a man's mind, or will, which is the chiefest and highest in his mind and will ; therefore we use to denominate men from that only which beareth rule in them : and thus we may say with Paul, " It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." For a disowned act that proceedeth from us, against the bent and habit of our wills, and the course of our lives, from the remnants of a carnal, misguided will, is not it that must denominate the person, nor is so fully ours as the contrary act. And therefore though indeed we sinfully participate of it ; yet when the question is, whether believing, or unbelief, sinning, or obeying be my work ; it is not comparatively to be called mine, which I am much more against than for. So on the other side, if the unsanctified have some transient, superficial, uneffectual acts of desire, or faith, or love to God, which are contrary to the bent and habit of their hearts, this is not theirs, nor imputable to

them, so far as hence to give them their denomination. It is not they that do it, but the common workings of the Spirit upon them.

If ever then you would be assured that you are Christians, look to the habitual bent of your hearts, and see that you do not only talk of Scripture, and slightly believe it, and speak well of Christ, with some good wishes, and meanings, and purposes; but as you love your souls, see that Christ be received as your dearest Saviour, with thankfulness and greatest love, and as your sovereign Lord and true subjection; and that he hath your superlative estimation and affections, and all things in the world be put under him in your souls. This must be so, if you will have the portion of believers: no faith that is short of this will prove you Christ's disciples indeed, or heirs of the promises made to believers. The voice of Christ that calls to you in the Gospel, is, "My son give me thy heart;" Prov. xxiii. 26. Do what thou wilt in ways of duty, and think as highly as thou wilt of thyself, thou art no true believer in Christ's account till thou hast given him thy heart. If he have thy tongue, if he have thy good opinion, nay, if thy body were burnt in his cause, if he had not thy love, thy heart, it were as nothing; (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) for thy works and sufferings, are so far acceptable (through Christ) as they are testimonies of this, that Christ hath thy heart. If he have not thy heart, he takes it as if he had nothing; and if he have this, he takes it as if he have all. For this is not only preferred by him before all; but also he knows that this commandeth all. If Christ have thy heart, the devil will not have thy tongue and life; the alehouse, or a harlot will not have thy body; and the world will not have the principal part of thy life. If Christ have thy heart, it will be heard much in thy conference; it will be seen in thy labours: for that which hath a man's heart will hardly be hid, unless he purposely hide it, which a Christian neither can nor ought to do. It would make a man wonder to hear some wretches, that will run from God as fast as they can, and yet face you down that God hath their hearts; that have no mind, so much as to meditate, or talk of Christ, or his precious blood, or mysterious redemption, or the glorious kingdom purchased by him; that will be at neither cost nor labour in his service, and yet profess that Christ hath their hearts: that will re-

fuse a holy, heavenly life, and perhaps make a scorn of it, and maliciously prate against the sanctified, and yet will stand to it that the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier of the elect, hath their hearts. No wonder if those hearts are ill managed, and in a miserable, deceived state, that are so unacquainted with themselves.

Faith entereth at the understanding ; but it hath not all its essential parts, and is not the Gospel faith indeed, till it hath possessed the will. The heart of faith is wanting, till faith hath taken possession of the heart. For by faith Christ dwelleth in the heart ; Ephes. iii. 17. And if he dwell not in the heart, he dwells not in the man, in a saving sort. He had some interest in Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, as to the head, and perhaps somewhat more in a superficial sort. But satan entered into the heart of one, and filled the heart of another of them with a lie, and the heart of the third was not right in the sight of God, and therefore he had no part or lot in Christ, but was still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity ; and all because Christ was not heartily entertained ; Acts v. 3. viii. 22, 23. It is in the heart that the word must have its rooting, or else it will wither in time of trial. It is seeking with the whole heart that is the evidence of the blessed ; Psal. cxix. 2. And it is a feigned turning when men turn not to God with the whole heart ; Jer. iii. 10. This is God's promise concerning his elect, "I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God : for they shall return unto me with their whole heart ;" Jer. xxiv. 7. See then that the heart be unfeignedly delivered up to Christ : for if Christ have it not, the flesh, the world, and the devil will have it. Your hearts must be a dwelling for one of these masters, choose you whether.

It is the damnation of the most professed Christians, that they have nothing for Christ but a good opinion, or a few good words, or outside services, or some slight religiousness on the bye, when the flesh and the world go away with their hearts, and yet they will not know it, or confess it. Christ will not be an underling or servant to your flesh. Your hearts he hath bought, and your hearts he will have, or you are none of his. If he shall have nothing from you but a name, you shall have nothing but the name of his purchased salvation.

III. The last part of the Direction yet remains, viz. that you must close with Christ entirely, as well as understandingly and heartily. It is whole Christ that must be received with the whole heart.

For the understanding of this, it must be known, both how and why Christ is offered to us.

As he came into the world to destroy the works of the devil; (1 John iii. 8.) and to seek and save that which was lost; (Luke xix. 19.) and by his mediation to reconcile us to God, and bring us up to glory; so two things were to be done, for the accomplishment of this: first he was himself to merit our salvation, and pay the price of our redemption on the cross, and in his own person to conquer the world, the devil, and death, and the grave: and then he was by his intercession in the heavens to make application of this, and bestow the benefits thus purchased by him. And because it was he, and not we, that made the purchase, it therefore pleased the Father that the purchased treasure should be put into his hands, and not immediately put into ours. He is become our treasury, and authorised to be our Head: all power is given him in heaven and earth. We have so foully miscarried already, that he will no more trust his honour in our hands, as at first he did. We shall have nothing of pardon, or grace, or glory, but what we have in and from the Son. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life;" 1 John v. 12. It is not only the nature and person of Christ that is to be believed in; but it is the person as impowered to certain ends, and clothed with his office that we must now entertain. Now the office of Christ being for our salvation, and the glory of God, is suited to these happy ends.

And our necessities are principally in these three points.

1. We have the guilt of sin upon us to be pardoned, and the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and the punishment of sin to be removed. 2. We have the corruption of our nature to be healed; the power of sin to be destroyed; the image of God repaired on us, and our hearts and lives to be acted and ordered according to the will of God; and to these ends, temptations to be conquered, and our souls directed, strengthened, and preserved to the end. 3. We must be raised from the grave at the last day; we must be justi-

fied in judgment, and possessed of that glory which is the end of our faith. To this, justification, sanctification, and glorification may the rest be reduced.

Now the office of Christ is suited to these necessities of ours ; and as we cannot possibly be saved unless all these necessities be supplied, and these works done for us : so we cannot possibly have these things done but by accepting of Christ, as authorised and impowered, by his office and perfections, to do them.

The glory that God will have by this work, I have before expressed to you at large. He will have his justice, and wisdom, and power, and holiness, and mercy to be demonstrated and honoured by Christ. And therefore Christ hath resolved to give out none of his benefits, but in such manner and ways as may best attain these highest ends.

These several points therefore I must entreat you here to note distinctly. 1. That you must be brought into a special relation to the person of Christ, as clothed with his office, before you can lay claim to his saving benefits. He is the Head, and you must become his spouse ; and so of the rest. This is called our uniting to Christ, which must go before our further communion with him. It is the will of God, that you shall never receive his benefits before you receive his Son ; (except only those benefits which go before your union with Christ himself, in order to the accomplishing it ; as the Gospel, the gift of faith to the elect, &c.) You shall never have actual pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, or glory, till you have first saving interest in Christ himself. He is the vine, and we are the branches : we must be planted into him, and live in him, or else we can have nothing further from God, nor do any thing acceptable to God. And therefore the first and great work of faith is to receive and close with the person of Christ, as clothed with his office.

2. Understand and note, that as you shall not have his great benefits before, or without his person ; so God hath resolved, that you shall not have his special benefits, unless you will take them all together : (I speak of men at age, that are capable of all.) You shall not have pardon and justification, or glory, without sanctification ; nor the comforts of Christ without the guidance and government of Christ. You must have all or none.

3. From hence it follows, that therefore you must receive and close with Christ entirely, in his whole office, as he is to accomplish all these works, or else you cannot be united to him. He will not be divided: you shall not have Christ as a justifier of you, if you will not have him as a guide, and ruler, and sanctifier of you. He will not be a partial Saviour: if you will not consent that he shall save you from your sins, he will not consent to save you from hell.

4. Understand, and note that Christ will look to his Father's interest and honour, and his own, as well as to your salvation; yea, and before it. And therefore you must not hope for any mercy from him, in any way that is dishonourable to him, or that is inconsistent with his own blessed ends and interest. And therefore do not look for any such grace from him as shall discharge you from your duty, or give you liberty to dishonour or disobey him; nor do not think that you shall have him related to you only for your own ends, but on terms of highest honour to God and your Redeemer. And do not think that your grace is ever the less free, because God's honour is thus preferred: for if you are Christians indeed, you will take God's interest, as your own highest interest, and will confess, that you could not have your own ends and welfare any other way.

5. Understand and note also, that as all your mercies are in the hand of Christ, so Christ hath appointed in his Gospel a certain way and course of means, in which he will bestow it: and you cannot expect it from him, in any other way but his own. As God hath made Christ the way, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him, so Christ hath ordained a standing course of means, which are his way for the making over of his benefits; and here you must have them or go without them.

6. Understand and note, that there are some of Christ's ends and benefits, that the very natural man desires, and some that corrupted nature is against. Now it is therefore the established way of Christ to promise us those which we can desire, on condition that we will also accept of, and submit to, those that we are against. Not but that his grace doth dispose men to the performance of such conditions; but his grace worketh by means: and a conditional promise is his established means to draw men's hearts to the performance of the condition (which well considered, is a sufficient

answer to the arguments that are commonly urged against the conditionality of the promise). As the Spirit doth powerfully work within; so he useth that word from without, as his instrument, which worketh sapientially and powerfully to the same work. If a physician have two medicines to give his patient, as necessary for his cure, the one very sweet, and the other bitter; the one which he loves, and the other which he loathes, he will promise him the sweeter, if he will take the bitter one; that by the love of one, he may prevail against the loathing of the other, and may entice it down. He will not promise the bitter one which is loathed, and make the taking of the sweet one the condition: he will not say, 'I will give thee this aloes, on condition thou wilt take this sugar;' but contrary, 'I will give thee the sweeter, if thou wilt take the bitter.'

In Christ's ends, and works, 1. We naturally are more willing of that which makes for ourselves directly, than of that which makes directly for the honour of God and the Redeemer. We prefer our own ends before God's glory. And, therefore, Christ hath so ordered the condition of his promises, that unless we will take him in his relations of dignity as King and Lord, and will make the glory and pleasing of God our principal end, we shall have none of him, or his saving benefits. For he came not to fulfil our selfish desires, but to fetch us off from ourselves, and recover us to God, that he might have his own. And if we will not have our all in God, we shall have nothing. 2. And naturally we are willing, as to our own benefits, to be pardoned, and freed from the curse of the law, and the flames of hell, and natural death, and punishment. And, therefore, we are thus far naturally willing of free justification; but we are unwilling to let go the seeming profit, and credit, and pleasure of sin, and to deny the flesh, and forsake the world; and we are averse to the spiritual felicity of the saints, and to the holiness of heart, and life, that is the way to it. And, therefore, Christ hath most wisely so ordered it, in the tenor of his promises, that our repentance and faith shall be the condition of our justification and deliverance from death and hell. And this faith is the believing in him, and accepting him entirely in his whole office, to sanctify us, and rule us, as well as to justify us. And thus we must take him wholly, or we shall have none of him. And the accepting him as

our teacher, and sanctifier, and king, is as much (at least the condition of our justification, and pardon, and deliverance from hell) as the accepting him as a justifier of us is. He that had the power in his own hands, and that made the free promise, or deed of gift, hath put in such conditions, as his own wisdom saw best; and they are such as suit most congruously to all his ends; even the glory of God, in all his attributes, and the Redeemer's glory, and our own, and most full and free salvation. And on his conditions must we have his benefits, or we shall never have them.

7. Lastly, understand and note, that the means which Christ hath resolved on for teaching and ruling us, ordinarily, are his word, his ministers, and his Spirit; all must be submitted to together, where they may be had, and none of them laid by, by separation. His word is the grammar, or book, as it were, that we must learn. His ministers must teach us this book; and his Spirit (who, in the apostles and prophets, indited and sealed it) must inwardly teach us, by powerful illumination. The word is God's laws. The ministers are his ambassadors, or heralds to proclaim them, and command obedience in his name; and his Spirit must open men's hearts to entertain them. The word is God's seed; the ministers are the husbandmen, or servants that sow it; and the Spirit must give the increase, without which, our planting, and watering will do nothing. He, therefore, that takes Christ for his master and king, must resolve to be taught and ruled by his established means, even by his word and ministers, and Spirit conjunct. For he that refuseth and despiseth these, doth refuse and despise Christ; and consequently the Father that sent him; Luke x. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 8. For it was never the meaning of Christ, when he became the Teacher and King of the church, to stay on earth, and personally, and visibly to teach them himself; but these three are his means, which all must submit to, that will be his subjects and disciples. And he that despiseth the word, shall be destroyed: Prov. xiii. 13. He that will not have the word, ministry, and Spirit teach him, will not have Christ teach him. And he that refuseth to be ruled by these three, shall be destroyed as a rebel against Christ himself; Luke xix. 27. Still it is supposed that ministers must teach and rule, according to this word.

And the society in which Christ will teach and govern

us, is his church. As members, therefore, of the universal church, and in communion with his particular church where we live and have opportunity, we must wait on Christ for his teaching and benefits. For this is his school, where his disciples must diligently attend and learn.

Lay all this together, and this is the sum. The object of justifying, saving faith, is one only undivided Christ, one in person but of two natures, God and man; in office the Mediator between God and man, who hath already done the work of satisfaction, and merit, and is authorized further to bestow the benefits. By the Gospel grant he hath given himself as Head and Husband, Teacher, King, and Saviour, to all that will entirely and heartily accept him; and with himself he giveth justification by the promise; sanctification by the word, ministry, and Spirit; and final absolution, and everlasting life. If ever then you will have Christ, and life, you must accept him in all these essentials of his person, and offices, and that to the ends which his redemption was intended for. You must be willing to be sanctified by him, as well as to be justified. You must at once unfeignedly become his disciples, his subjects, his members, if you would become his saved ones. You must consent, that as your Teacher, and your Lord, he shall teach and rule your heart, and life, by his word, ministers, and Spirit, in communion with his church. No bar or exception must be put in, nor reservation made against any one of these parts of his office. If you yield not to these parts of his saving work, that tend but to the compleitive growth, you sin, and deprive yourselves of the benefit; but if you yield not to those that must make you truly sanctified, and justified men, you cannot be saved. The essentials of Christ's person, and office, do constitute him the Christ, and if he be not received in all those essentials, he is not received as Christ.

And thus I have given you the sum of the Gospel, and the description of faith, and true Christianity in this Direction for a right closing with the Lord Jesus Christ. And experience of most that I discourse with, persuades me to think this Direction of great necessity, and to entreat you thoroughly to peruse and consider it. I find abundance of ignorant people, that talk much of Christ, but know very little of him; that can scarce tell us whether he be God or man, or which person in the Trinity he is, nor to what end

he was incarnated, and died, nor what relation he stands in to us, or what use he is of, or what he now is, or what he is engaged to do for us. But if we ask them about their hopes of salvation, they almost overlook the redemption by Christ, and tell us of nothing but God's mercies, and their own good meanings and endeavours. And I am afraid too many professors of piety, (do look) almost all, at the natural part of religion, and the meaning of their own hearts, and lives, (and I would this were better done) while they forget the supernatural parts, and little are affected with the infinite love of God in Christ. I desire such to consider these things: 1. You overlook the sum of your religion, which is Christ crucified, besides whom Paul desired to know nothing. 2. You overlook the fountain of your own life, and the author of your supplies; and you strive in vain for sanctification, or justification, if you seek them not from a crucified Christ. 3. You leave undone the principal part of your work, and live like moral heathens, while you have the name of Christians. Your daily work is to study God in the face of his Son; and to labour with all saints to comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; Eph. iii. 18, 19. All your graces should be daily quickened, and set a work by the light of faith, in the contemplation of the Redeemer, and his blessed work. This is the weight that must set all the wheels a going. You do God no service, that he can accept, if you serve him not in this Gospelwork, of loving, trusting, and admiring, and praising him in the Redeemer, and for his redemption. 4. And so you rob God of the principal part of his glory, which you are to give him; which is for his most glorious work of our redemption. I pray you read over again the ends of this work, which I laid down in the beginning of this Direction. 5. Moreover, you rob yourselves of your principal comfort, which must all come in by living upon Christ. 6. And you harden the Antinomians and Libertines, and tempt men to their extremes, that run from us as Legalists, and as men that savour not the doctrine of free grace, and are not of a Gospel spirit and conversation. I would our great neglect of Christ had not been a snare to these mistaken souls, and a stumbling-block in their way.

O sirs, if a thought of your hearts, if a word of your

mouths have not some relation to Christ, suspect it, yea, reject it. Call it not a sermon or a prayer, nor a duty, that hath nothing of Christ in it. Though the pure Godhead be your principal end, yet there is no way to this end but by Christ; and though love, which is exercised on that end, must animate all your graces and duties, as they are means to that end, yet faith hath love in it, or else it is not the Christian faith; and Christ is the object of your faith and love; and your perfect, everlasting love will be animated by Christ. For your love and praise will be to him that was slain, and redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and nation, and made us kings and priests to God. So much for the fifth Direction.

Direct. VI. The next direction which I would give you for a thorough conversion, is this: 'See that the flesh be thoroughly mortified, and your hearts be thoroughly taken off the world, and all its pleasures, and profits, and honours, and that the root of your fleshly interest prevail not at the heart, and that you think not of reconciling God and the world, as if you might secure your interest in both.'

This is a very common cause of the deceit and destruction of such as verily think they are converted. It is the very nature and business of true conversion, to turn men's hearts from the flesh, and from the world to God, and from an earthly and seeming happiness, to a heavenly, real, everlasting happiness. And when men are affrighted into some kind of religiousness, and yet never learnt to deny themselves, and never mortified their fleshly mind, but the love of this world is still the chiefest principle at their hearts; and so go on in profession of godliness, with a secret reserve that they will look as well as they can to their outward prosperity, whatever become of their religion; and they will have no more to do with the matters of another world, than may stand with their bodily safety in this world; these are the miserable, deluded hypocrites, whose hopes will prove as the giving up of the ghost; whom Christ will disown in their greatest extremities, after all their seeming religiousness. O sirs, look to this as ever you would be happy. It is an easy, it is a common, it is a most dangerous thing, to set upon a course of outward piety, and yet keep the world next your hearts, and take it still as a great part of your felicity, and secretly to love your former lusts, while you seem

to be converted. The heart is so deceitful, that you have great cause to watch it narrowly in this point: it will closely cherish the love of the world, and your fleshly pleasures, when it seems to renounce them, and when your tongue can speak contemptuously of them. It was not for nothing Christ would have the firstfruits of his Gospel church, (who were to be the example of their successors,) to sell all, and lay it down at the feet of his apostles: and it is his standing rule, that whoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his disciple; Luke xiv. 33. In estimation, affection, and resolution, it must be forsaken by all that will be saved; and also in practice, whenever God calls us to it. You can have but one happiness; if you will needs have it in this world, in the contenting of your flesh, there is no hope of having it also in another world, in the fruition of God. If you think not God and heaven enough for you, and cannot let go the prosperity of the flesh for them, you must let go all your hopes of them. God will not halve it with the world in your hearts, nor part stakes with the flesh; much less will he be below them, and take their leavings. Heaven will not be theirs, that set not by it more than earth. God will not call that love to him sincere, which is not a superlative love, and able to make you even to hate all those things that would draw away your affections and obedience from him; Luke xiv. 26, 27. There is no talk of serving God and mammon, and compounding you a happiness of earth and heaven. Do therefore as Christ bids you, Luke xiv. 28—30.

Sit down and count what it must cost you, if you will be saved, and on what rates it is that you must follow Christ. Can you voluntarily, for the love of him, and the hope of glory take up your cross, and follow him in poverty, in losses, in reproaches, through scorns, and scourgings, and prisons, and death? Do you value his loving-kindness better than life? Psal. lxxiii. 3. Can you deny your eyes and appetites their desire? Can you consent to be vile in the eyes of men, and to tame your own flesh, and keep it in subjection, and live a flesh-displeasing life, that having suffered with Christ, you may also be glorified with him? Rom. viii. 17. If you cannot consent to these terms, you cannot be Christians, and you cannot be saved. If you must needs

be rich, or must be honourable, yea, if you must needs save your estates, or liberties, or lives, it is past all question, you must needs let go Christ and glory; if you must needs have the world, you must needs lose your souls. If you must have your good things here, you must not have them hereafter too, but be tormented, when Christ's sufferers are comforted; Luke xvi. 25. These hopes of purveying for the flesh, as long as they can, and then of being saved, when they can stay here no longer, are they that have deceived many a thousand to their undoing. It is a strange thing to see how the world doth blind very knowing men, and how unacquainted these hypocrites are with their own hearts. What a confident profession of downright godliness many of them will make; yea, of some extraordinary height in religion, when nothing is so dear to them as their present prosperity, and God hath not near so much interest in them as the flesh? What contrivances some of them make for riches, or rising in the world? And how tender others are of their honour with men; and how tenacious they are of their mammon of unrighteousness; and how much money and great men can do with them. And most of them pamper their flesh, and serve it in a cleanlier way of religiousness, even as much, though not so disgracefully and grossly as drunkards and whoremongers do in a more discernible sensuality. If the times do but change and countenance any error, how small an argument will make their judgments bend with the times. If truth and duty must cost them dear, O how they will shift, and stretch, and wriggle, to prove truth to be no truth, and duty to be no duty; and no argument is strong enough to satisfy them, when the flesh doth but say, 'It is bitter, it is dangerous, it may be my undoing.'

It is none of my meaning, that any should needlessly run into suffering, or cross their governors and themselves, through a spirit of pride, singularity, and contradiction; but that men should think themselves truly religious, that keep such reserves for their fleshly interest, and shew by the very drift of their lives, that they are worldlings, and never felt what it was to be crucified to the world, and deny themselves, but are religious on this supposition only, that it may stand with worldly ends, or at least not undo them in the world; this is a lamentable hypocritical self-deceit. When God hath so plainly said, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the

world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" 1 John ii. 15. Nay, that the neighbourhood, and all the country that know them should ring of the worldliness of some, that think themselves good Christians; and yet they will not see themselves. What a cheating, blinding thing is the world!

Well, sirs, if you will be Christians, count what it must cost you; and if you will be heirs of heaven, away with the world; cast it out of your hearts: and if your hands must yet trade in it, yet trade not for it; use it for God, but enjoy it not for itself. Take yourselves as strangers here; and look on the world as a desolate wilderness, through which, in the communion of the militant saints, you may safely travel on to heaven; but do not make it your home, nor take it for the smallest part of your felicity. To be sanctified without mortification, is a palpable contradiction. Be at a point with all things below, if you will groundedly hope for the heavenly inheritance. But I shall purposely forbear to enlarge this any further, because I have preached and written a treatise on this subject, which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. VII. My next Direction is this: 'If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves, and all that you have to God.'

This is the very form and life of sanctification. To be sanctified, is to be separated in heart, life, and profession, from all other masters and ends, to God. When the heart that was set upon the world and flesh, is separated from them, and inclined to God by the power of love, and devoted to him, to serve and please him; this is indeed a sanctified heart. And when the life that before was spent in the service of satan, the world, and the flesh, is now taken off them, and spent, as to the drift and course of it, in the service of God, for the pleasing and glorifying of him, from the impulse of love, this is indeed a holy life. And herein consisteth the very nature of our sanctity. And when a man doth but profess to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to give up his heart and life unto God, this is a profession of holiness. God is both on the title of creation preservation, and redemption, our absolute Lord or Owner, and we are not our own, but his; and therefore we must give to God the things that are God's, and glorify him in our souls and bodies, which are his; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. As we

are his own, so he will have his own, and be served by his own. Do not imagine that you have any title to yourselves, or propriety in yourselves; but without any more ado, make a full, unreserved, absolute resignation of yourselves, of your understandings, and of your wills, of your bodies, and of your names, and of every pennyworth of your estates, to God, for whom and from whom you have them. Think not that you have power to dispose of yourselves, or of any thing that you have. Ask not flesh and blood, what life you shall lead, or what mind or will, you shall be of? But ask God, to whom you do belong. Ask not your carnal selves, what you shall do with any of your estates, but ask God, and then ask conscience, Which is the way that God would have me use it in, that is, which way may I use it to be most serviceable to God? and that resolve upon. No service that you do to God will prove you sanctified, unless you have heartily and absolutely given up and devoted yourselves to him; and he that gives up himself, must needs give up all that he hath with himself. For he cannot keep it for himself (ultimately), when even himself is given up to God. Though you be not bound to give all that you have to the poor, nor all to the church, nor to deny your own bodies or families their due supplies, yet must it all be given up to God, even that which you make use of for yourselves and families: for as you are given up to God yourselves, so you must feed yourselves as his, and clothe yourselves and your families as his, to fit yourselves and them for his service, and not as your own, for the satisfying of your flesh. Thus it is that all comes to be pure to the pure, sanctified to them that are themselves first sanctified; because when you feed yourself, you do but feed a servant of God, that is consecrated to him, and separated from things common and unclean. And even as the tithes and offerings, that were given for the food and maintenance of the priests and Levites, were called the Lord's portion, and holy to the Lord, because they were their portion, that were separated to his altar; even so that which is necessary to fit you for God's service, while you use it to that very end, is sanctified in your sanctification, and is holy to God; for all his saints are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, to offer up acceptable sacrifice to him. And thus, "whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, you must do all to the glory of God;" 1 Cor. x. 31. "For of him,

and through him, and to him are all things, and therefore to him must be the glory for ever ;” Rom. xi. 36. God who is the end of your hearts and lives must be the end of every action of them, unless you will step out of the way of order, and safety, and holiness. For every action that is not from God, and by God, and for God, is contrary to the nature of true sanctification. If then you would be Christians indeed be heartily willing that God should have his own. Understand what an excellent honour, and privilege, and happiness it is to you to be his. If his right to you will not move you let your own necessity and benefit at least move you to give up yourselves and all that you have to God. Bring your hearts to the bar, and plead the cause of God with them, and convince them of God’s title to them, and how sinfully they have robbed him of his own all this while. Have your days and hours, your wealth and interest, been used purposely for God as his own? O what abundance be there, that in word and confident profession, do give themselves up, and all to God, and yet the use of themselves and all, do plainly shew that it is no such matter; but they dissembled with God, and yet never knew so much by themselves. How little do they use for God, when they have with seeming devotion resigned all to him? If a lord, or knight, or gentleman of £4,000 or £3,000 a year, or £400, or £300, were to shew the accounts of all his expenses, how much of all this should you find expended for God, when they have acknowledged that all is his? One would think by their lives, that they look to be saved by robbing God, and confessing the robbery, by saying that all is God’s, while they allow him next to nothing.

The devoted, resigned, sanctified soul hath the true principle of all obedience, and that which will do much to repel all temptations, and carry him through the greatest straits and trials. If I am not my own, I need not be over solicitous for myself, but may expect that he that owneth me should care for me: nor do I need to use any sinful shifts for my own preservation. If I have nothing of my own, what need I to sin for the saving of any thing? What need I to venture upon unwarrantable means, to preserve either credit, or goods, or life? It is self, and own, that are the roots of all sin, the heart of the old man, and the seed of hell: nothing else is pleaded against God and our salvation.

If the flesh would have you abuse God's creatures, you must remember they are not your own. If the devil would entice you to sin against God, either for the getting or keeping of any creature, it would easily repel the temptation, were you but rightly sensible that nothing is your own : for God hath no need that you should sin to get riches or honours for him. If you are called to let go your houses, or lands, or friends, or lives, or to deliver up your bodies to the flames, did you but rightly take them as none of your own, how easy would it be ! You can be content that another man give his goods, or life itself to God, whenever God requireth it ; but your own, you cannot be content to part with, and that because it is your own. But if you had rightly resigned all to God, and took not yourselves or any thing for your own, but looked upon yourselves and all as God's, the greatest works of obedience or suffering, would be much more easy to you ; and you would have little difficulty or hindrance in your way. Self-denial is but sanctification itself, denominated from the wrong end and principle, which we forsake. And where self is denied and dead, what is there left to draw us from God, or stand up against him, in any part of our lives ? So much interest as self hath in you, so much the world and the devil have in you. And nothing is more proper to a miserable hypocrite, than deep reserves of life, or worldly things to themselves, while they seem to give up all to God.

O happy soul, that is wrought to this sincerity by the Spirit of grace, to say unfeignedly, ' O Lord, I devote and resign myself wholly unto thee ; I am not my own, nor desire any further to be, than to be thine : I have nothing that is my own, nor desire to have any thing that shall not be thine.' Happy and truly wise is that man, that keeps as constant and faithful a reckoning, how he lays out himself and all that he hath for God, as a faithful steward doth of his receivings and layings out for his master's use. Every penny that is reserved from God, is the fuel of sin, and a sacrifice to the devil and the flesh ; and if it be pardoned to the truly penitent, by the sacrifice of Christ, that is no thanks to us that would else have made it the fuel of hell. God is not so careless of us or his mercies, but that he keeps an exact account of all that we have from him, and will require an account of our improvement of all : not only requiring his

own again, but his own with advantage; Matt. xxv. 27. Why else did he give us such leisure and ability to approve it? I can never forget what a sinful thought was once in my mind, which I will venture to confess, because it may possibly be the case of others, that so they may beware. Hearing of some that used to lay by the tenth part of their yearly comings in, for charitable uses, I purposed to do so too, and thought it a fair proportion: but since I have perceived what a vile and wicked thought that was, to offer to cut out a scantling for God, or give him a limited share of his own, or say that so much he shall have, and no more. Though we cannot say that God must have all in any one kind of service only; either only for the church, or only for the poor, or only for public uses; yet must we resolve, that in one way or other he must have all; and the particular portions to the poor, or church, or other uses, must be assigned by truly sanctified prudence, considering which way it may be most serviceable to God. I must relieve my own family, or kindred, if they want, but not because they are my own, but because God hath commanded me, and so hath made it a part of my obedience. But if I see where I may do more service to God by relieving a stranger, and that God doth more require it, I must yet prefer them before all the kindred that I have in the world. When the Christian pattern was set up by the primitive church, Acts ii. iv. they sold all, and laid down the whole price at the apostles' feet, which was not distributed to their natural kindred only, but to all the poor Christians that had no other relation to them, even as every one had need. And as it is the loving of our spiritual brethren in Christ, that is made the sign of our translation from death to life, so is it the relieving of Christ in these his members, that is, the relieving them, because they are his members, that is made the very matter of our cause in the last judgment, and the ground of the sentence of life or death; Matt. xxv. I must provide for my own body, and you must provide for your children, but that is (as I said before) not as I am my own, nor as your children are your own; but as I am a servant of Christ, that must be supported in his service, or as yourselves and yours are put under your care and duty by God. So that I may give it to myself or others, when I can truly say, I do but use it principally for God, and think that

the principal service I can do him by it ; but I may neither take to myself, nor give to any that are nearest to me, any more than God commandeth, or his service doth require. When you and yours have your daily bread, (which also must be used for him) you must not go to flesh and blood, but to God, to ask which way you shall dispose of the remainder. This is a strange doctrine to the unsanctified world, but that is because they are unsanctified. And it is a doctrine that a worldly hypocrite is loath to believe and understand ; but that is because of carnality and hypocrisy, that always deals with God like Ananias and Saphira, lying to the Holy Ghost, and giving God but half (and few so much as half) when they daily confess that all is from him, and should be his, and pretend to be wholly devoted to him. There are few men so bad, but will spare God something rather than go to hell : but indeed this is not to devote it to God, but to use it for themselves, thinking by their sacrifices to stop the mouth of justice, and to please God by a part, when they have displeased him in the rest. I much fear (and not without apparent cause) that abundance among us, that think themselves Christians, do worship and serve God, but as some Indians are said to offer sacrifice to the devil, not for any love they have to him or his service, but for fear he should hurt them. And there are few hypocrites but will pretend it is from very love.

O sirs, it is a greater matter to resign and give up yourselves and all you have to God, and heartily to quit all claim to yourselves, and all things, than many a thousand self-deluded professors do imagine. Many look at this but as some high, extraordinary strain of piety. And the Papists almost appropriate it to a few that live in monastical orders, when indeed the sincerity of the resignation and dedication, is the very sincerity of sanctification itself.

And let me tell you, that the unfeigned convert that attains to this hath not only plucked up the root of sin, (though all of us have too many strings of it left,) not only stopped up the spring of temptation, and got the surest evidence of his uprightness, but also is got himself into the safest and most comfortable state. For when he hath absolutely resigned himself and all to God, how confidently may he expect that God should accept him, and use him as his own ? and how comfortably may he commit himself and

his cause, and all good affairs to God, as knowing that God cannot be negligent and careless of his own? It is an argument that may make us confident of success, when we can say as David, (Psal. cxix. 94.) "I am thine, save me." Isa. lxiii. 19. Even Christ himself doth ingratiate his elect with the Father on this account, (John xvii. 6. 9, 10.) "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine: and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." And indeed by resigning all to God, it is the more our own; that is, we have unspeakably more of the benefit of it, and so there is no way to make it our own, but by quitting it absolutely up to God. This is the mystery that the world will not learn, but God will teach it all that shall be saved by the Spirit, and by faith; Matt. xvi. 24—26. "Then Jesus said to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: for whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Methinks, a man that hath time, and strength, and money, should long to be disbursing all for God, that he might put it in the surest hands, and it may be out of danger: yea, that it may be set to the most honest and profitable usury. For when God hath it from the dedication of an upright heart, it is sure: but till God have it, it is in hazard, and all that he hath not is lost, and worse than lost. When it is in our hands, thieves may steal it, bad servants or unadvised children may consume it, and our own thievish flesh may steal it, which is worst of all, and consume it on our lusts: or if our children consume it not, their children may: or if they save it, they may lose it most of all by feeding their pride and fleshly minds by it; but if once it be in God's hands, it is safe. You can make no comfortable account of one penny, nor of one hour's time, unless you can tell God that he had it himself, that you used it for him, or that you live to him in the main, and that the rest is pardoned. O that those parents understood this doctrine, that had rather strengthen the fetters and temptations of their children with it, and help them into that state which few are saved in, than to devote and use their estates for God! Though Christ hath told them how hardly the rich are saved, and how few such come to heaven, yet what

care is taken to leave their children rich, and how little to further the work of God, or their own accounts, that they may hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord;" Matt. xxv. 21. 23.

O sirs, if you would be good husbands, and provident indeed for your souls, see that your hearts prove not false to you in this, and make no secret reserves for yourselves, but that God have yourselves first, and all things with yourselves; as Christ first gives himself to you and all things with himself; Rom. viii. 32. Never think your hearts right, but when they can readily say, "We are not our own;" 1 Cor. vi. 19. Think not that you come aright to God in any duty, if you do not heartily devote yourselves to him, and entreat him to accept you as wholly his, who neither are nor desire to be your own; and entreat him accordingly to use you for himself. Say not that any thing is your own that you possess, (Acts iv. 32.) in respect to God, and a communion of charity; though it be your own (as a talent that God doth intrust you with) in respect of men, by a legal propriety.

And then trust God boldly, for you are his own: serve him cheerfully, and draw near him believingly, for you are his own. In poverty, sickness, temptations, and the approach of death, rejoice in him confidently, for you are his own. Into his hands commend your departing spirits, for they are his own. What reason of distrustful fears can you now have? Do you fear lest God will yet hate you? Why remember that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh;" Ephes. v. 29. Nay, for shame, think not the blessed God to be worse than the wicked world; and Christ saith of the world, (John xv. 19.) "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." And will not God then love his own do you think? And if you are willing to be his own, Christ is certainly willing that you should be his own, and will own all that own not themselves, but him. "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out: and when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice;" (John x. 3, 4. xiii. 1.) "Having loved his own which are in the world, to the end he loved them."

If you are but truly willing to be his own people, he is certainly willing to be your own Saviour and your own God. Not that you can have such a propriety in him, as he hath in you. But in these relations he will be your own; and glory, and help, and salvation shall be yours. And you may well conclude that "God, even our own God shall bless us;" Psal. lxvii. 6. There is much comfort may be fetched from that in Luke xv. 31. though parables must not be stretched too far: "Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

And upon this ground it is that we have the greater encouragement, to believe that God accepteth of our very infants themselves; because it is his will that they should be devoted, engaged, and dedicated to him: and that which he would have us dedicate and offer to him, he will surely accept in that relation to which he would have it offered.

I beseech you therefore remember what it is to be truly converted: it is to be called from things common and unclean, and separated to God; it is to be brought nigh to him, as the children of his household, that are themselves, and all that they have, in his hands: it is to be taken off yourselves and your own, and to lose yourselves and all you have in God, by the most gainful loss; lest indeed you lose yourselves and all, while you persuade yourselves you save or gain. It is a taking God in Christ for your all, and so being content to have nothing but him and for him. It is a changing of your old master self, for God, a better master: and your old work, which was self-seeking and pleasing, to self-denial, and to the seeking and pleasing of God. See now that this be done, and that your treacherous hearts hide nothing for themselves, as Rachael under pretence of necessity, hid her idols, but say, 'Here I am, to be thine, O Lord, and to do thy will.'

More I would have said on this point, but that I have written of it already, in a sermon on 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. of the absolute dominion of Christ, and our self-resignation; which I desire you here to peruse, to set this further home.

Direct. VIII. My next advice that the work of conversion may not miscarry, is this; 'Take heed, lest you mistake a mere change of your opinions, and outward profession, and behaviour, for a true saving change.'

Wicked opinions must be changed, and so must evil pro-

fessions, and outward practices ; but if no more be changed, you are wicked still. I have great cause to fear that this is the most common damning deceit, that useth to befall professors of godliness, and that it is the case of most hypocrites in the church. A man may be brought to hold any truth in Scripture as an opinion ; and so far be sound and orthodox, and yet never be indeed a sound believer, nor have his heart possessed with the life and power of those sacred truths. It is one thing to have a man's opinion changed, and another thing to have his heart renewed, by the change of his practical estimation, resolutions, and dispositions. It is one thing to turn from loose, profane opinions, to strict opinions ; and think the godly are indeed in the right, and that their case and way is safest and best ; and it is another thing to be made one of them in newness, spirituality of heart, and life. A lively faith differs much from opinion, and that which is in unsanctified men, which we call faith, and is a kind of faith indeed, it is but a mere opinionative faith : I call it an opinionative faith, because it differs from saving faith, much like as opinion doth from knowledge. Merely speculative it is not ; for some intention of practice there is ; but the practical intention of such persons differs from the predominant intentions of the sanctified ; even as their opinionative faith differs from the saving faith.

And it is no wonder if there be abundance of these opinionative believers in the world. For the truths of God have very great evidence ; especially some of them ; and men are yet men, and consequently reasonable creatures ; and, therefore, have some aptitude to discern the evidence of truth. Some truths will compel assent even from the unwilling. Many a thousand ungodly men believe that to be true which they would not have to be true, if they could help it ; because they do not heartily take it to be good in respect to themselves. Truth as truth, is the natural object of the understanding ; though the same truth, as seeming evil to them, may be hated by them that are forced to assent to it. I know that sin hath much blinded men's understandings, and that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, because they are foolishness to him, and must be spiritually discerned ; 1 Cor. ii. 14. But though he cannot savingly receive them without the special illumination of the

Spirit, nor opinionatively receive them without a common illumination of the Spirit, yet he may have this opinionative conviction and an answerable reformation, by the common grace of the Spirit, without the special grace. An unsanctified man may have something more than nature in him; and every unregenerate man is not merely, or only natural. Many are far convinced, that are far from being savingly converted. I can make you know that you shall die; that you must part with all your wealth, and fleshly pleasures, and divers such truths, whether you will or not. And one of these truths doth let in many more that depend upon them. So that as dark as the minds of natural men are, they yet lie open to many wholesome truths.

And as the understanding is thus far open to conviction, so the will itself, which is the heart of the old man, will far sooner yield to the changing of your opinions than to the saving change of heart, and life. It is not the bare opinion that your fleshly interest doth fight against, but the power and practice of godliness is it; and opinions, as they lead to these. It is one thing to be of opinion, that conversion is necessary, that sin must be forsaken, and God preferred before all the world; and it is another thing to be indeed converted, and to forsake sin, and to prefer God before the world. It is a far easier matter to convince a worldling that he should not love the world, than to cure him of his worldly love: and to convince a drunkard that he should leave his drunkenness, and the whoremonger that he should abhor his lusts, than to bring them to do these things, which they are convinced of. It will cost them dear (as the flesh accounts it) to deny themselves, and cast away the sin; but it costeth not so dear to take up the opinion that these things should be done. It will cost them dear to be down-right for God, and practically religious; but they can take up an opinion that godliness is the best and necessary course at a cheaper rate. Strict practices pinch the flesh, but strict opinions may stand with its liberty. O what abundance of our poor neighbours would go to heaven, that are now in the way to hell, if an opinion that godliness is the wisest course, would serve the turn. If instead of conversion God would take up with an opinion that they ought to turn; and if, instead of a holy, heavenly life, God would accept of an opinion, that such are the happiest men that live such a life;

and if, instead of temperance, and meekness, and self-denial, and forgiving wrongs, God would accept of an opinion, and confession, that they should be temperate and meek, and self-denying, and should forbear others, and forgive them; then O what abundance would be saved, that are now in little hope of salvation! If instead of a diligent life of holiness, and good works, it would serve turn to lie still, and be of a good opinion, that men should strive, and labour for salvation, and lay out all they have for God, how happy then were our towns, and countries, in comparison of what they are!

I am afraid this deceit will be the undoing of many, that they take a change of their opinions for a true conversion. Have not some of you been formerly of the mind, that the best way is to eat and drink, and be merry, and venture your souls, and follow your worldly business, and never trouble yourselves with any deep and searching thoughts about your spiritual state, or your salvation? Have you not thought that this diligent godliness is but a needless strictness, and preciseness? and have you not since been convinced of your error, and perceived, that this is the wisest course, which you before thought to be needless, and thereupon have betaken you to the company of the godly, and set upon a course of outward duties? and now you think that you are made new creatures, and that this is regeneration, and the work is done. I fear lest this be all the conversion that many forward professors are acquainted with! but woe to them that have no more.

And because the face of our present times, doth plainly shew the commonness and prevalency of this disease, and because it is a matter of so great concernment to you, I shall here give you (but as briefly as I well can) some signs by which a true conversion may be known from this mere opinionative change.

1. The true convert is brought to an unfeigned hatred of the whole body of sin; and especially of those secret or beloved sins, that did most powerfully captivate him before; 1 Cor. vi. 11. Tit. iii. 3. 5. Col. v. 3. 5. 7, 8. But the opinionative convert is still carnal, and unmortified, and inwardly at the heart, the interest of the flesh is habitually predominant. He is not brought to an unreconcilable hatred to the great master sins that ruled him, and lay deep-

est ; but only hath eased the top of his stomach, and cropt off some of the branches of the tree of death. The thorns of worldly desires and cares are still rooted in his heart ; and, therefore, no wonder if they choak the seed of wholesome truth, and there be a greater harvest for the devil than for God ; Gal. v. 24. vi. 4. 8. Rom. viii. 5. Mat. xiii. 22.

2. Another sign that follows upon this, is, that the sound convert doth carry on the course of his obedience, in a way of self-denial, as living in a continual conflict with his own flesh, and expecting his comfort and salvation to come in upon the conquest. And, therefore, he can suffer for Christ, as well as be found in cheaper obedience, and he dare not, ordinarily, refuse the most costly service. For the spoils of his fleshly desires are his prey, and crown of glorying in the Lord ; Luke xiv. 27. 33. Gal. v. 17. 24. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Luke ix. 23, 24. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Gal. vi. 14.

But the opinionative convert still liveth to his carnal-self. And, therefore, secretly at least, seeks himself, and layeth hold on present things, as the true convert layeth hold on eternal life. The truths of God being received but into his opinion, do not go deep enough to conquer self, and to take down his great idol, nor make him go through fire and water, and to serve God with the best, and honour him with his substance much less with his sufferings and death. He hath something that he cannot spare for God ; Matt. xiii. 21. Luke xviii. 22—24.

3. The sound convert hath taken God for his portion, and heaven for that sure and full felicity, which he is resolved to venture upon. That is it that he hath set his heart and hopes upon, and thither tends the drift of his life ; Col. iii. 1—4. Matt. vi. 20, 21.

But he that is changed only in his opinions, had never such sure apprehensions of the life to come ; nor so full a confidence in the promises of God, as to set his heart unfeignedly upon God, and make him truly heavenly-minded. He may have a heavenly tongue, but he hath an earthly heart. A bare opinion, be it never so true, will not raise men's hearts so high, as to make their affections, and the very design and business of their lives to be heavenly ; Phil. iii. 18—20. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. viii. 5.

4. The sound convert hath seen the vileness of himself, in the sinfulness of his heart and life, and the misery there-

by deserved ; and so is a sincerely humbled self-accusing man.

But the opinionist is commonly unhumbled, and well-conceited of himself, and a self-justifying Pharisee ; unless it be that self-accusing will cost him no disgrace, and he take it up as a custom, or that which may bring him into the repute of being humbled and sincere. For his opinion will not search, and pierce his heart, nor batter down his self-exalting thoughts, nor root up the master-sin of pride. These are two great works for an opinionist to perform. And, therefore, you shall hear him more in the excusing of his sin, the magnifying of himself, or the stiff maintaining of his own conceits, than in unfeigned self-abasing ; Rom. xii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 19, 20. iii. 18. 2 Cor. x. 12. Luke xvi. 15.

5. The sound convert is so acquainted with the defects, and sins, and necessities of his own soul, that he is much taken up at home, in his studies, and cares, and censures, and his daily work. The acting and strengthening of grace, the subduing of corruption, and his daily walk with God, are much of his employments. Above all keeping, he keeps his heart, as knowing that thence are the issues of life. He cannot have while to spy out the faults of others, and meddle with their affairs, where duty binds him not, as others can do ; because he hath so much to do at home ; Gal. vi. 3, 4. Prov. iv. 23.

But the opinionist is most employed abroad, and about mere notions, and opinions ; but he is little employed in such heart-searching, or heart-observing work. His light doth not pierce so deep as to shew him his heart, and the work that is there to be necessarily done. As the change is little upon his heart, so his employment is little there. He is little in bewailing his secret defects and corruptions, and little in keeping his soul's accounts ; and little in secret striving with his heart to work it into communion with God, and into a spiritual, lively, fruitful frame. He is forward to aggravate others, and oft-times severe enough in censuring them. But he is a very gentle censorer of himself, and a patient man with his own corruptions, and puts the best construction upon all that is his own. He hath much labour, perhaps, in shaping his opinions, but little for the humbling and sanctifying his heart, by the power of the truth.

6. And as the difference lieth thus constantly in the heart, so it is usually manifested by the tongue; Matt. xii. 34. The sound convert is most desirous to discourse of those great and saving truths, which his very heart hath taken in, and which he hath found to be the seed of God for his regeneration, and the instruments of that holy and happy change, that is made upon him. He feeleth most favour and life in these great and most necessary points, which formed the image of God upon him. And upon these he daily feeds and lives. Read John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 1—6. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8—11. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Acts xvi. 22, 23. In these Scriptures, you may find what points they were that the greatest saints did study and live upon.

But the opinionist is most forward to discourse of mere opinions, and to feed upon the air of notions, and controversies of lesser moment. For one hour's holy, heavenly, experimental, heart-searching discourse, that you shall have from him, you shall have many and many hours' discourse of his opinions. I mean it indifferently of all his opinions. I mean it, I say, of all his opinions whether true or false. For though falsehoods cannot be fit food for the soul, yet truths as themselves, also may be made of little service to them. A man may be a mere opinionist that hath true opinions, as well as he that hath false. Almost all the free and zealous discourses of these men, on matters of religion, is about their several sides, and parties, and opinions. If they be set upon a point, especially wherein they seem to themselves to be wiser than others, they have a fire of zeal for it in their breasts, that makes them desirous to be propagating it to others. About the orders and ceremonies of the church; about the forms of prayer, and the accidents of worship; about infant baptism, or other such controversies in religion, is the freest of their discourse.

Yea, you may perceive much of the difference, even in the very manner of their conference. A serious Christian, even when he is necessitated to speak of lower controverted points, yet doth it in a spiritual manner, as one that more savoureth higher truths, and makes a holy and heavenly life his end, even in these lower matters; and deals about such controversies in a practical manner, and in order to the growth of holiness.

But the opinionists, even when they speak of the most weighty truths, do speak of them but as opinions ; and when they discourse of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, it is but as they discourse of a point in philosophy, or little better. They go not through the shell to the kernel ; they look after the truth, but they have little relish of the goodness.

The like may be said of their reading, and hearing of sermons. The sound convert feeleth life and spirit in that which is little savoury to the opinionist. It is one thing in a sermon or text, that is pleasing to a true Christian, and another thing usually that is most pleasant to the opinionist. The true Christian delighteth in, and feedeth on, the inward life of spiritual doctrine, and the good which they offer him ; that is, indeed, it is upon God, and Christ himself, that he is feasting his soul in reading, and hearing. For this is the soul of all, without which, letters and words are but a carcase. But the superficial opinionist is much more taken up, either with the history, or the elegancy of speech, or with the rational light of the discourse, still sticking in the bark, and savouring not Christ, and the Father in all. As a man that reads the deeds, or lease of his own lands, delights in one thing ; and a clerk that reads the same, or the like, in a book of precedents, for his learning, delights in another thing. So is it in this case.

7. And hence it follows, that they are several sorts of duties, and exercises, usually, that these several sorts of persons are most addicted to. The sound convert is most addicted to those spiritual means, that tend most to the strengthening of his faith, and warming his heart with the love of God, and promoting holiness, and destroying sin ; but tend to furnish him with speculative knowledge, and discourse, and to satisfy his fancy, or curious mind. The sound convert is much addicted to prayer, even in secret, and to heavenly meditations, and gracious discourse. But the opinionist is much more addicted to reading histories, or controversies, or dogmatical divinity, or civil and political matters. The sound convert savoureth best those preachers, and books, that speak the most weighty, spiritual truths, in the most weighty, spiritual manner, in power, and demonstration of the Spirit. But the opinionist relisheth those preachers, and books most, that either speak curious-

ly to please the ear, or exactly, and learnedly to please the natural intellect, or that speak for the opinions, or party that he is addicted to. But others he hath less mind of.

8. Moreover, the sound Christian layeth out most of his zeal, affections, and endeavours, about the great essentials of religion, and that, as I said, in a practical manner. But the opinionist layeth out his zeal upon opinions. Right or wrong it is but as opinions. Of these he makes his religion; for these he contendeth. He loveth those best that are of his own opinion, though there be nothing of the special image of God upon his soul; or if he love a true Christian, it is not so much for his holiness and spirituality, as because he is of his mind in those matters of opinion. Hence it is that he is usually a bitter censurer of those that are not of his opinion, how upright soever they may be; his very esteem of men, and love to them is partial, and factious, to those that are of his mind and sect. A Papist will esteem and love men of the Popish sect; and an Anabaptist will esteem and love men of that sect most; yea, a Protestant, if he be an opinionist, doth esteem of men, and love them as a sect. Whereas, the true Christian, as he is truly Catholic, and of the Catholic church, which is not confined to Papists, no, nor Protestants, so he hath truly Catholic affections, and loveth a Christian as a Christian, a godly man as godly; yea, if he saw more serious godliness in one that is not of his opinion in lesser things, yet would he love him more than one that is in such matters of his opinion, that is ungodly, or of more doubtful piety. For as it is God in Christ that he principally loveth, so it is Christ that he admireth in his members; and so much of Christ as he sees in any, so much are his special affections towards them.

9. Ordinarily, the mere opinionist will sacrifice the very ends of the Gospel, and the honour and success of the great fundamental truths of God, to the interest of those opinions which he hath in a singular manner made his own. He will rather hinder the propagation of the common truths, and the conversion of the ignorant, than he will silence his opinions, or suffer them to lose any advantages with the world. Hence it is, that we cannot prevail with the Papist, to silence awhile the differences between us and them, till we

have taught their ignorant (in Ireland, and other barbarous parts) the knowledge of those truths that all are agreed in. Nor can we get many Anabaptists, or any such sect, that is engaged in a division, to forbear their opinions, till we have endeavoured to lay the necessary grounds, on which all must build, that will be saved. But though it be apparent to the world, that their disputes and contentions do exceedingly harden the ignorant and ungodly against all religion, and hinder their conversion and salvation; yet will they go on in the unseasonable, intemperate bruited of their conceits, and will not be persuaded to agree on those terms, for the managing of differences, as most tend to secure the interest of Christ and his Gospel in the main. If an opinionist be for the truth, he is usually without much zeal for it, because that nature doth not befriend the great spiritual truths of the Gospel, so much as it doth errors, and private conceits. But if he be of erroneous opinions, he is usually very zealous for them. For corrupted nature, and self, and satan, (and the world oft-times) do more befriend these, and furnish him with a zeal for them, and blow the coal. The counterfeit angel of light, is very ordinarily also a spirit of heat, and great activity; not a reviving fire, nor a refining fire, but a consuming fire, devouring Christian love, and meekness, and patience, and therewith the church, and truth of God, so far as it can prevail. For lesser matters, that minister questions, such men can lay by that which tends to godly edifying in faith. Yea, that Charity, which is the very end of the commandment, out of a "pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. From these they swerve, and turn aside to vain jangling; oft-times desiring to be teachers of such things, in which they understand not what they say, nor whereof they speak. Consenting not to the wholesome words of Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, they teach otherwise, being proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions, and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth;" 1 Tim. i. 4—6. vi. 3—5. Yea, they sometimes take their opinions, or their worldly gain that they often aim at, to be instead of godliness. And think, that to be godly, is to be of their mind and way. They "use to strive

about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers, and their vain babblings increase to more ungodliness ;” 2 Tim. ii. 14. 16.

But the true convert looks principally to the main. He loves every known truth of God ; but in their order, and accordingly to their worth and weight. He will not, for his own opinions, wilfully do that which will hazard the main, or hinder the Gospel, and the saving of men’s souls. Though he will not be false to any truth, yet he will avoid “ foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strife ; and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, and meekly instruct opposers : following righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart ;” 2 Tim. ii 22—25.

10. Lastly, True converts are steadfast, but opinionists are usually mutable and inconstant. The sound convert receiveth the greatest truths, and receives the goodness as well as the truth ; and takes it not only into the head, but into the heart, and giveth it deep rooting : he closeth with God as his only felicity, and with Christ as his only refuge, and Redeemer, and with heaven as the sure, everlasting glory, to which the world is but a mole-hill, or a dungeon. No wonder then if this man be “ steadfast, and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that knows his labour is not in vain in the Lord ;” 1 Cor. xv. 58.

But the opinionist, either fasteneth on smaller matters, or else holdeth these great matters but as bare opinions, and therefore they have no such interest in his heart, as to establish him against shaking trials and temptations. For two sorts there are of these opinionists, the one sort have no zeal for their own opinions, because they are but opinions ; and these are time-servers, and will change, as the king > their landlords change, and fit their opinions to their worldly end. The other sort have a burning zeal for their opinions : and these use to wander from one opinion to another, not able to resist the subtlety of seducers, but are taken with fair and plausible reasonings, not able to see into the heart of the cause. These are as “ children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight and cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ;” Ephes. iv. 14. When with great confidence they have held one sort of opinions awhile, and

railed against those that were not of their mind ; ere long they will themselves forsake them, and take up another way, and be as confident in that, and take no warning by the experience of their former deceit. And thus they go oft from one opinion to another, till at last, finding themselves deceived so oft, some of them cast off all religion, and think there is no certainty to be found in any, suspecting religion, when they should have suspected their false hearts : and all this comes to pass because they never received the truth in the love of it, that they might be sanctified and saved by it ; 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. Nor ever gave it deep entertainment, or took it to heart that it might thoroughly convert them ; but as a bare opinion into the brain to polish their tongues and outsides, and deceive themselves as much as others.

And thus I have shewed you the difference between a sound convert and an opinionist, or one that hath but an overly, superficial change, that you may see which of these is your own condition.

To return now to my advice, and exhortation, I entreat every person that readeth or heareth these words, to see that they stick not in an opinionative conversion. To which end I further desire you, 1. To consider that it is a higher matter that Christ came into the world for, than to change men's bare opinions ; and it is a higher matter that the Gospel is intended for, and that ministers are sent to you for. For it is more than a corruption of men's opinions, that sin hath brought upon you ; and therefore it must be a deeper disease that must be cured. The work of Christ by his Gospel, is no less, than to fetch you off all that which flesh and blood accounts your happiness, and to unite you to himself, and make you holy, as God is holy, and to give you a new nature, and make you as the dwellers or citizens of heaven, while you walk on earth ; Phil. iii. 20, 21. And these are greater matters than the changing of a party or opinion. The Holy Ghost himself must dwell in you, and work in you ; and employ your soul and life for God, that you may study him, and love him, and live to him here, and live with him for ever. Do but think well of the ends and meaning of the Gospel, and how much greater matters it drives at, and then you will see that there is no taking up with an opinionative religiousness.

2. Keep company, if it be possible, with the most sober,

spiritual, and heavenly professors, that will be drawing you to the observation of your own heart and life, and opening to you the riches of the love of Christ, and winning up your affections to God and heaven : and be not the companions of inexperienced wranglers, that have no other religion, but a zeal for their opinions, and will endeavour rather to make you like satan, than like God, by possessing your minds with malice, and bitter thoughts of your brethren, and employing your tongues in reproaches, and vain strivings, and make you firebrands in the places where you live : neither be companions of them that hold the truth no deeper than opinion ; for though some such may be useful to you in their places, yet if you have not more edifying familiars, your danger will be very great, lest you should let go the life of religion, and take up with mere notions and formalities as they.

3. When you have considered that every truth of God is a message to your hearts, as well as to your heads, and hath a work of God to do upon them, look after that work ; and when you have heard or read a truth, go down into your hearts, and see what it hath done there : and if you find not in your will, and resolutions, and affections the image and fruits of the truth you have heard, fetch it up again, and ruminate upon it, and do not think you have received it, or done with it, till this be done : yea, take it but as lost, and sinfully rejected, if it have not done you some good at the very heart.

4. Also be sure that you practise all practical truths, upon the first opportunity, as soon as you have heard them. Imprison them not in unrighteousness. Cast them not out in forgetfulness : use not a lecture of divinity as if it were a lesson of music, or a mere philosophical or historical discourse. Read not the doctrine of salvation, and the promise of heaven, and the forewarnings of everlasting misery, as you read a common story, or a groundless conjecture in an almanack ; but as a message from God, which tells you where you must dwell for ever, and as a direction sent from heaven, to teach you the way thither. Fall to work then, and practise what you know, if you would be Christians indeed. “ Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” For the opinionative hearer seeth but a slight appearance of the truth, as a man that looks on his face in a glass, which he quickly forgets ; but he that is

a sound believer and practiser, and not only an opinionative, forgetful hearer, is the man that shall "be blessed in his deed;" James i. 22—25. Opinion without practice, is building on the sand; but hearing, and sound believing, and doing, is building upon the rock, where the building will stand after all assaults; Matt. vii. 26—28. An opinionist doth but seem to be religious, while he keeps his reigning sins, and therefore his religion is in vain; but the practical religion is the pure and undefiled religion; James i. 26, 27. Hearty obedience will not only shew that your religion is deeper than mere opinion, but it will also advance it to a greater purity, and root it more deeply than it was before. A man that hath studied the art of navigation in his closet, may talk of it almost as well as he that hath been at sea; but when he comes to practise it, he will find that he is far to seek; but let this man go to sea, and join practice and experience to his theory, and then he may have a knowledge of the right kind. So, if a man that hath only read over military books, would be a true soldier; or a man that hath only studied physic, would be a true physician, what better way is there, than to fall to practice? And so you must, if you would have a religion that shall save your souls; and not only a religion that will furnish you with good opinions and expressions.

5. Moreover, if you would get above opinion, be still searching more and more after the evidences of the ancient fundamental truths that you have received; and lay open your hearts to the power of them. Think it not enough that you take the Christian religion for true, but labour after a clearer sight of its truth: for you may possibly upon some conjecture take it for a truth, by bare opinion, when as the sight of fuller evidences, and a full sight of those evidences might raise you from opinion to a working, saving faith.

6. Lastly, Take heed lest any thing be suffered to keep possession of your hearts, and so to confine the truth to your brain. When the world is kept up in life and power, and is nearest the heart, there is no room for the word there, but it must float upon the top, and swim in your opinion, because it can go no deeper, your lusts and profits having possession before it. The word can never go to the heart with unmortified men, but by casting your idols out of your hearts: nor will it take rooting in you, but by rooting out the world.

O sirs, if you knew the misery of a mere opinionist, you would sure be persuaded now to practise these Directions, that may raise you higher. An opinionist is a deceiver of himself, and oft of others : a troubler of the church, if he have any zeal for opinions, and hit (as usually he doth) on the wrong ; and when his religion is right, he is wrong himself, being out of the way, even when he is in the right way, because he is not right in that way ; for he doth but sit down in it, when he should travel in it. A runner shall not win the prize by being in the right way only, unless he make haste. The knowledge of the opinionist doth but serve to aggravate his sin, and cause him to be beaten with many stripes ; but is not of force to sanctify his heart and life, and to save him, James ii. fully shews. Stick not therefore in an opinionative religiousness.

Direct. IX. My next Direction that your conversion may prove sound, is this, ‘ Acquaint your souls by faith with the glory of the everlasting kingdom, and see that you make it your portion and your end, and from thence let the rest of your endeavours be animated.’

No man can be a sound Christian, that knoweth not the ends and portion of a Christian. There is a great deal of difference between the desires of heaven in a sanctified man, and an unsanctified. The believer prizeth it above earth, and had rather be with God than here ; (though death that stands in the way, may possibly have harder thoughts from him.) But to the ungodly, there is nothing seemeth more desirable than this world ; and therefore he only chooseth heaven before hell, but not before earth ; and therefore shall not have it upon such a choice. We hear of gold and silver mines in the Indies : if you offer a golden mountain there, to an Englishman that hath an estate and family here that are dear unto him, perhaps he will say, ‘ I am uncertain whether their golden mountains be not mere fictions to deceive men ; and if it be true, that there are such things, yet it is a great way thither, and the seas are perilous ; and I am well enough already where I am, and therefore let who will go thither for me, I will stay at home as long as I can.’ But if this man must needs be banished out of England, and had his choice whether he would go to the golden islands, or to dig in a coalpit, or live in a wilderness, he would rather choose the better than the worse. So it is with an ungodly

man's desires, in respect to this world, and that to come. If he could stay here, in fleshly pleasure for ever, he would ; because he looks at heaven as uncertain, and a great way off, and the passage seemeth to him more troublesome and dangerous than it is, and he is where he would be already : but when he sees that there is no staying here for ever, but death will have him away ; he had rather go to heaven, than to hell, and therefore will be religious, as far as the flesh and the world will give him leave, lest he should be cast into hell, when he is taken from the earth.

But take an Englishman that is in poverty and reproach, and hath neither house nor land, nor friend to comfort him, and let him have the offer of a golden island, and a person of unquestionable skilfulness and fidelity, that will promise in short time to bring him safe thither ; if he believe this person, and can put his trust in him, doubtless he will be gone and follow him over sea and land ; and though the passage may somewhat daunt him, yet the promised possession will carry him through all. So is it with the true Christian, he is dead to this world, and sees nothing here in which he can be happy ; he is burdened and wearied with sin and suffering ; he is firmly persuaded of the truth of the Gospel ; and seeth by faith the world that is to flesh invisible ; and believeth in Jesus Christ, who hath promised to convey him safely thither, and therefore he would go away ; and though he love not death, the stormy passage, yet he will submit to it, having so sure a pilot, because he loves the life which through death he must pass into, and had rather be there than here.

Such as a man's principal end is, such is the man, and such is the course of his life. He that takes this world for his portion, and makes the felicity of it his end, is a carnal, worldly, unsanctified man, whatever good and godly actions may come in upon the bye. It is he, and only he, that is a sanctified believer, who looks on heaven as his only portion, and his sailing through the troublesome seas of this world, of purpose to come to that desired harbour ; not loving these seas better than the land of rest, which he is sailing to ; but patiently and painfully passing through them, because there is no other way to glory. As it is the desire of the land to which he is sailing, that moveth the mariner or passenger to do all that he doth in his voyage ; and the de-

sire of his home or journey's end, that moveth the traveller all the way ; and the desire of seeing a perfect building that moveth the builder in every stroke of his work ; so it must be the love of God, and the desire of everlasting blessedness, that must be the very engine to move the rest of the affections and endeavours of the saints, and must make men resolve on the necessary labour and patience of believers. Take off this weight, and all the motions of Christianity will cease. No man will be at labour and sufferings for nothing, if he can avoid them. It is a life of labour, though sweet to the spirit, yet tedious to the flesh, which Christianity doth engage us in ; and there is much suffering to be undergone ; and this to the very last, and to the denial of ourselves ; and if God require it, to the loss of all the comforts of the world : for no less than forsaking all that we have, will serve to make us Christ's disciples. And will any man do this for he knows not what ? Will any man forsake all that he hath, unless it be for something better, which may be as sure to him as that he had, and may make him more happy ? Look to it therefore, that you have right and believing thoughts of heaven, and that unfeignedly you take it for your home and happiness, and look not for any other portion. Till you see so much of the certainty and excellency of everlasting glory, as shall prevail with you to lay out your faithful labour for it, and to be at a point with all this world, as having laid up your treasure and hopes in the world to come, you have no ground to conclude that you are true Christian converts.

Seeing therefore, that it is heaven that is the very reason, the end, the life of all your religion, it follows, that you must necessarily understand somewhat of its excellency, and believe its certainty, and accordingly set your hearts upon it, and make the attainment of it your daily work and business in the world : this is to be a convert indeed.

Remember therefore first, what I told you before, wherein the nature of this blessedness doth consist. I will only name the essentials of it, that your apprehensions may be right, and forbear to say much, as being done already.

1. The first thing considerable in our everlasting blessedness, will be our personal perfection of the whole man ; this is in order to the perfection of our everlasting operations and enjoyments. Our bodies shall be no more flesh and

blood, nor corruptible, or mortal, or subject to hunger, or pain, or weariness, nor to passions that rebel against the reasonable soul ; but they shall be spiritual bodies, and immortal, and incorruptible, and undefiled. Our souls will be perfected in their natural perfections, and in their moral. They shall be of more advanced understanding, and comprehensive wisdom than now. Our wills shall attain to perfect rectitude in a perfect conformity to the will of God, and every affection shall be brought to its perfect order and elevation: all sin shall be done away, whether it were in the understanding, will, affections, or the actions. The executive power will be answerable to the rest of the perfections, and to the blessed work which it hath to do : and thus we shall be like the angels of God.

2. The next thing considerable in our blessedness, is, our approximation or approach to God: we shall be admitted into the holiest, and brought as near him as our natures are capable of, and we are fit for.

3. Moreover, we shall be members of the New Jerusalem, and receive our glory in communion with that blessed society, and so as members contribute to her glory.

4. And we shall behold the glorified person of our Redeemer, and he will be glorified on us as the fruits of his victory.

5. And we shall behold the face of the blessed God, and see his wisdom, and power, and glory, and know as we are known. Though we cannot now fully know the manner, yet in that sense as our angels are said to behold the face of God, (Matt. xviii. 10.) we also shall behold it.

6. We shall also enjoy him in the nearest relation, and by the most raised, vigorous affections of our soul. We shall be filled with his love as full as we can hold, and we shall abound with perfect love to him again : and the joy that is in his presence, which this intuition, and everlasting love will afford us, is such as no heart is here able to conceive.

7. Being thus furnished, we shall be employed in his perfect praises, in singing and rejoicing to him with the heavenly host, and magnifying his heart and holy name.

8. And in all this will the glory of God shine forth, and he will be admired in his saints ; 2 Thess. i. 10, 11. In us

it shall appear how abundant he is in power, and wisdom, and goodness, in holiness, faithfulness, and righteousness.

9. And God himself will be well pleased with us, and with the new Jerusalem, and his glorified Son, and will take complacency in this manifestation and communication of his glory and of himself unto his creatures. And this is his ultimate end, and should be the highest point of ours. The revolution hath now brought all to that centre, which is both the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. His will is the fountain or efficient source of all, and it is the ultimate end and perfection of all.

There is no more to add, as to the matter, but that as to the duration, first, we may take it as that which leaves no room for any addition, that all this will be everlasting, leaving not any doubts or fears of a cessation. Abundance of glorious adjuncts of this felicity might be mentioned; but I pass them all by, and do but name these few which are the essential constitutive parts of our happiness, because I have touched them before, and more fully spoken of them in the "Saints' Rest." Thus much I thought meet to mention here, that you may have somewhat of that in your eye, that I am persuading you to intend and seek; and the rather, because I perceive that many of the godly have not such distinct apprehensions of the constitutive parts of this felicity, as they should have; but much wrong their souls, and God himself, and the glory of their profession, by looking but at some of the parts.

Believe God, sirs, that this is the life that you shall live, if you will take it for your portion, and set your hearts upon it, and follow the conduct of Christ for the obtaining it. Can you be content with heaven alone? Is it enough for you, though you be despised and persecuted in the world? Do you account this for certainty and excellency to be worth all? Yea, that all is dross and dung to this? Thus must you do if you will be true converts. For all such are heavenly in their minds and hearts, and in the drift of all their lives and conversations.

Direct. X. My next advice that you may prove sound converts, is this, 'Rest not, and count not yourselves truly converted, till God and his holy ways have your very love, and desire, and delight; and take not that for a saving

change, when you had rather live a worldly, ungodly life, if it were not for the fear of punishment.'

I shall speak but little of this, because I touched upon it before, when I told you that Christ must have your hearts, and because it is but a consecratory of the last, or contained in it. But yet I think it best to present it here distinctly to your consideration, because a slavish kind of religiousness, doth deceive so many, and because the life of grace is here expressed. I deny not but holy fear is exceeding useful to us; even a fear of the threatenings and judgments of God. But yet I must tell you, that in fear there is much more that is common to the unsanctified, than there is in love, desire, and delight. Though "the fear of the Lord be the beginning of wisdom," it is love that is the perfection; and that fear is not filial, and of the right strain, if love be not its companion. Fear of punishment shews that you love your natural selves; but it shews not that you love God, and are true-hearted to him. The devils fear and tremble, but they do not love. It is love, and not fear that is the bias, the inclination, and (as I may say) the nature of the will of man. By his love it is that you must know what the man is. The philosopher saith, "Such as a man is, such is his end," which is all one as to say, "Such as a man is, such is his love." You may fear a thing at the same time when you hate it; and it is too common to have some hatred mixed with fear. You may be as much against God and his holy ways, when fear only drives you to some kind of religiousness, as others are that scarce meddle with religion at all. The first thing that God looks at, is what you would do; and the next is, what you do. If you do it, but had rather leave it undone, you lose your reward, and God will take it as if you had not done it: for it was not you that did it, if you did it not from love; but it was fear that dwelleth in you. God takes men's hearty desires and will, instead of the deed, where they have not power to fulfil them: but he never took the bare deed instead of the will. A blockish kind of worship, consisting in outward actions, without the heart, is fit to be given to a wooden god, a senseless idol; but the true and living God abhors it. He is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth; such worshippers he seeketh, and such he will accept; John iv. 23, 24. A beggar will be glad of your alms, though you leave it with an ill will, because he needeth it:

but God hath no need of you, nor of your service, and therefore think not that he will accept you on such terms. That people worship God in vain, that draw near him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, while their heart is far from him; Matt. xv. 8, 9. A man's heart is where his love is, rather than where his fear is. If you should lie still upon your knees, or in the holy assembly; if you should be the strictest observer of the ordinances on the Lord's days, and yet had such hearts in you, as had rather let all these alone, if it were not for fear of punishment; it will all be disregarded, and reckoned to you according to your wills, as if it had never been done by you at all. It is love that must win love, or make you fit for love to entertain. If you give your goods to the poor, or your bodies to be burned in a cause that in itself is good, and yet have not love, it availeth nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.5. You will not think your wife hath conjugal affection that loveth another man better than you, and had rather be gone from you, if she could live without you. It is an unnatural son that loves not his father, but had rather be from him, than with him. If God called you to a bestial drudgery or slavery, he would then look but for your work, and not care much whether you be willing or unwilling. If your ox draw your plough, and your horse carry his burden, you care not much whether it be willingly or unwillingly. Or if it be an enemy that you have to deal with, you will look for no more than a forced submission, or that he be disabled from doing you hurt. But this is not your case: it is a state of friendship that the Gospel calls you to, you must be nigh to God, his children, and the members of his Son, espoused to him by the dearest, strongest bonds: and do you think that it is possible that this should be done without your wills and affections? If you can be content with the portion of a slave and an enemy, then do your task, and deny God your affections: but if you look for the entertainment and portion of a friend, a child, a spouse, you must bring the heart of a friend, and of a child, and of a spouse. Fear may do good by driving you to the use of means, and taking out of your hands the things by which you would do yourselves a mischief: it may prepare you for saving grace, and when you are sanctified, it will prove a necessary servant of love, to keep you in awe, and save you from temptations. But love is the ruling affection

in the sanctified, and fear is therefore necessary, because of the present imperfection of love, and because of the variety of temptations that here beset us. Think not therefore that you are savingly renewed, till God have your very hearts. When you do but believe and tremble, it is better than to be unbelieving, and stupid, and secure ; but you are not true Christians till you believe and love. We use to fly from that we fear, and therefore do apprehend it to be evil to us. We avoid the presence and company of those that we are afraid of, but we draw nigh them that we love, and delight in their company. We fear an enemy ; we love a friend. We fear the devil naturally, but we do not love him. It is love that is that affection of the soul that entertaineth God as God, even as good ; though that love must be accompanied with a filial fear, even a dread and reverence of his majesty and greatness, and a fear of displeasing him. If you should toil out yourselves in religious duties, with a heart that had rather forbear them, if you durst, you have not the heart of God's children in your breasts. The magistrate can frighten men to the congregation and outward worship. You may lock a man in the church, that had rather be away : and will any man think that this makes him acceptable to God ? You may keep a thief from stealing by prison and irons, but this makes him not accepted with God as a true man. You may cure a man of cursing, and swearing, and railing, and idle and ribald talking, even in a minute of an hour, by cutting off his tongue ; but will God accept him ever the more, as long as he has a heart that would do it if he could ? There are abundance of people at this day that are kept from abusing the Lord's day, and from swearing, and stealing, yea, and from laying violent hands on all about them that are godly, and this by the law of men, and the fear of present punishment. And do you think that these are therefore innocent or acceptable with God ? By this account you may make the devil a saint, when he is chained up from doing mischief. You may as well say that the lion is become a lamb, when he is shut up in his den ; or that a mastiff dog is become harmless and gentle, when he is muzzled. Believe it, sirs, you are never Christians till you see that in God that wins your hearts to him, so that you would not change your master for any in the world ; and till you see that in the hopes of everlasting glory, that you would not change it for any

thing else that can be imagined by the heart of man ; and till you see that goodness in a heavenly life, that you had rather live it than any life in the world. You are not converted to God indeed, till you had rather live in holiness, than in sin, if you had your freest choice ; and till you would gladly be the strictest, holiest person that you know in the world ; and long after more and more of it, and fain would reach perfection itself : for though we cannot be perfect here, yet no man is upright that desireth not to be perfect. For he that loveth holiness, as holiness, must needs love the greatest measure of holiness, with the greatest love. This is it that maketh sound converts to be so constant and faithful with God. A man is forward and ready to a work that he loves, when he draws back from it, as if it were a mischief, that hath no mind to do it. A man is hardly kept from the persons, and places, and employments that he loves : but a little will withdraw him from that which he loveth not. Why is it that we have so much ado to take off a drunkard from his companions and his lusts, but because he loves them better than temperance and gracious company ? And why can we so hardly draw the lustful wretch from his filthy lusts, or the glutton, or the idle, sensual person from his needless or excessive recreations, but because they love them ? And why is it that you cannot draw the worldling from his covetousness, but he parteth with his money almost as hardly as with his blood, but because he loveth it ? And therefore what wonder if temptations be resisted, and the fairest baits of the world despised by him, that is truly in love with God ? No wonder if nothing can turn back that man from the way to heaven, that is in love both with heaven and with the way. No wonder if that man stick close to Christ, and never forsake a holy life, that tasteth the sweetness of it, and feels it to do him good, and had rather go that way than any in the world. There is no true Christian but can say with David, that “ a day in God’s courts is better than a thousand ; and he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents (yea, or the palaces) of wickedness.” Do but mark those professors that prove apostates, and forsake the way of godliness which they seemed to embrace, and see whether they be not such as either took up some bare opinions and outward duties upon a flash of superficial illumina-

tion, or else such as were frightened into a course of religion, and so went on from duty to duty, for fear of being damned, when all the while their hearts were more another way, and they had rather have been excused. These hypocrites are they that are disputing so oft the obligations to their duty, and asking, 'How do you prove that it is a duty to pray in my family, or a duty to observe the Lord's day, or to come constantly to the congregation, or to use the communion of the godly in private meetings, or to repeat sermons, or sing psalms, and the like?' Intimating that they are as birds in a cage, or hens in a pen, that are boring to get out, and had rather be at liberty. If it were not for the fear of the law of God that is upon them, they had rather let all these duties alone, or take them up but now and then at an idle time, when satan and the flesh will give them leave. If a feast be prepared and spread before them, a good stomach will not stand to ask, 'How can you prove it my duty to eat?' but perhaps the sick that loath it may do so. If the cup be before the drunkard, he doth not stand on these terms, 'How do you prove it my duty now to drink this cup and the other cup.' No, if he might have but leave, he would drink on, without any questioning whether it be a duty. If the gamester, or the whoremonger, might but be sure that he should escape the punishment, he would never stick at the want of a precept, and ask, 'Is it my duty?' If there were but a gift of twenty pounds a man to be given to all the poor of the town, yea, and to all the people in general, I do not think I should meet with many people in the town that would draw back and say, 'What word of God commandeth me to take it?' Or, 'How can you prove that it is my duty?' And, why is all this, but because they have an inward love to the thing; and love will carry a man to that which seemeth good for him, without any command or threatening. If these ungodly wretches had one spark of spiritual life within them, and any taste and feeling of the matters that concern their own salvation, instead of asking, 'How can you prove that I must pray with my family, or that I must keep the Lord's day, or that I must converse with the godly, and live a holy life?' they would be readier to say, 'How can you prove that I may not pray with my family, and that I may not sanctify the Lord's day, and that I may not have communion with the saints in holiness?' Seeing so great a mercy is of-

ferred to the world, why may not I partake of it as well as others?' I can perceive in many that I converse with, the great difference between a heart that loves God and holiness, and a heart that seems religious and honest without such a love. The true convert perceiveth so much sweetness in holy duties, and so much spiritual advantage by them to his soul, that he is loath to be kept back; he cannot spare these ordinances and mercies, no more than he can spare the bread from his mouth, or the clothes from his back, yea, or the skin from his flesh; no, nor so much. He loveth them, he cannot live without them. At the worst that ever he is at, he had rather be holy than unholy, and live a godly than a fleshly, worldly life. And therefore, if he had but a bare leave from God, without a command to sanctify the Lord's day, and to live in the holy communion of the saints, he would joyfully take it with many thanks: for he need not be driven to his rest when he is weary, nor to his spiritual food when he is hungry, nor to Christ the refuge of his soul, when the curse and accuser are pursuing him. But the unsanctified hypocrite that never loved God or godliness in his heart, he stands questioning and inquiring for some proof of the necessity of these courses. And if he can but bring himself to hope that God will save him without so much ado, (which by the help of the devil he may easily be brought to hope,) away then goes the duty. If you could not shew him that there is a necessity of family prayer, and a necessity of sanctifying the Lord's day, and a necessity of forsaking his tippling and voluptuousness, and a necessity of living a heavenly life, he would quickly resolve of another course: for he had rather do otherwise if he durst. He never was religious from a true predominant love to God and a holy life, but for fear of hell, and for other inferior respects.

Remember this when you have precious opportunities before you, of doing or receiving good, and when you see that you have leave to take these opportunities, and yet you draw back, and are questioning, 'How we can prove it to be your duty? Or that you cannot be saved without it?' Do not these questions plainly shew that you love not the work and delight not in a holy life? and that you had rather let it alone? Are you not blind if you see not this is in yourselves? Yea, it is plain that you have such an averseness or

hated to God and a holy course of life, that if you did but know what shift to make to escape damnation, you would fly away from God and holiness, and have as little to do with them as you can. Your questions and cavils do plainly declare this wicked enmity and backwardness of your hearts; and consequently shew how far you are from true conversion.

Not that I am of their mind that think there is any good which the law of Christ obligeth us not to accept, and which we can refuse without sin and danger to ourselves: for God doth both draw us, and drive us at once. But when the threatening and punishment only can prevail with men, and men love not God and godliness for themselves, but had rather have liberty to live as the ungodly, I shall never take one of these for a sanctified man, nor have any hope of the saving of such a soul, how far soever his fears may carry him from his outward sins, or to outward duties; till God shall give him a better conversion than this, I say, I have not the smallest hope of this man's salvation. Then you are God's children, when the honour, the work, the family, the name of your Father are lovely and delightful to you: and when you grieve that there are any remnants of sin in your souls, and when your sins are to you as lameness to the lame, that pains them every step they go, and as sickness to the sick, that makes them groan, and groan again, and long to be rid of it: and when you think those the happiest men on earth that are the most holy, and wish from your hearts that you were such as they, though you had not a house to put your head in: when you look towards God with longing thoughts, and are grieved that your understandings can reach no nearer him, and know no more of him, and that your hearts cannot embrace him with a more burning love: when you admire the beauty of a meek, a patient, a mortified, spiritual, heavenly mind, and long to have more of this yourself, yea, to be perfect in all holiness and obedience: when your hearts are thus brought over to God, that you had rather have him than any other, and rather live in his family any where, and rather walk in his ways than in any; then are you indeed converted, and never till then, whatever other dispositions you may have.

And now if that were my business, what abundance of reason might I shew you, to make you willing to come over unto God, with love, and with delight. Whom else can

you love if he that is love itself seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in him and from him; the creature hath none of itself, nor for itself: to love a life of sin, is to love the image and service of the devil, and to love that which feeds the flames of hell; what is it then to love this sin so well, as for the love of it to fly from God and godliness? Methinks men at the worst should love that which will do them good, and not prefer that before it which will hurt them. Do sinners indeed believe that God and holiness will do them hurt, and that sin will do them greater good? Is there ever a man so mad, that he dare speak this and stand to it? If indeed you think it best to live in sin, and therefore had rather keep it than leave it; your understandings are befooled, I had almost used Paul's phrase and said, bewitched; Gal. iii. 1. Will it do you any hurt to leave your beastly, sensual lives, and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" This is the doctrine of saving grace; Tit. ii. 11—13. Would it do you any harm to be assured of salvation, and ready to die, and to know that angels shall conduct your departing souls to Christ, and that you shall live in joy with him for ever? Or to be employed in those holy works that must prepare you for this day, and help you to this assurance? If God be naught for you, if holiness, and righteousness, and temperance be naught for you, then you may as well say, heaven is naught for you; and therefore you must resolve for sin and hell, and see whether that be good for you. I shall say no more of this point, because I have written of it already, in the conclusion of the "Saints' Rest," which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. XI. The next part of my advice is, 'If you would not have this saving work miscarry, turn then this present day and hour, without any more delay.'

Somewhat I have spoken of this already, and therefore shall say the less. But yet I shall back this Direction with such reasons as will certainly convince you, if you be not unreasonable, of the folly of delay, and shew you that it concerneth you presently to return. And though my reasons will be numerous, it is not the number, but the strength of them, that I shall urge you principally to consider; and

because of the number, I will go over them with the greater brevity.

1. Consider to whom it is that you are commanded to turn: and then tell me whether there can be any reason for delay. It is not to an empty, deceitful creature, but to the faithful, all-sufficient God: to him that is the cause of all things; the strength of the creation, the joy of angels, the felicity of the saints, the sun and shield of all the righteous, and refuge of the distressed, and the glory of the whole world. Of such power, that his word can take down the sun from the firmament, and turn the earth and all things into nothing; for he doth more in giving them their being and continuance. Of such wisdom, that was never guilty of mistake, and therefore will not mislead you, nor draw you to any thing that is not for the best. Of such goodness, as that evil cannot stand in his sight, and nothing but your evil could make him displeased with you; and it is from nothing but evil that he calleth you to turn. It is not to a malicious enemy, that would do you a mischief, but it is to a gracious God, that is love itself: not to an implacable justice, but to a reconciled Father: not to revenging indignation, but to the embracement of those arms, and the mercy of that compassionate Lord, that is enough to melt the hardest heart, when you find yourself as the poor returning prodigal, (Luke xxv. 20.) in his bosom, when you deserved to have been under his feet. And will the great and blessed God invite thee to his favour, and wilt thou delay and demur upon the return? The greatest of the angels of heaven are glad of his favour, and value no happiness but the light of his countenance; heaven and earth are supported by him, and nothing can stand without him; how glad would those very devils be of his favour, that tempt thee to neglect his favour! And wilt thou delay to turn to such a God? Why man, thou art every minute at his mercy; if thou turn not, he can throw thee into hell when he will, more easily than I can throw this book to the ground; and yet dost thou delay? There are all things imaginable in him to draw thee: there is nothing that is good for thee, but it is perfectly in him; where thou mayst have it certain and perpetuated. There is nothing in him to give the least discouragement: let all the devils in hell, and all the enemies of God on earth, say the worst they can against his majesty, and they are not

able to find the smallest blemish in his absolute holiness, and wisdom, and goodness : and yet wilt thou delay to turn ?

2. Consider also, as to whom, so to what it is that thou must turn. Not to uncleanness, but unto holiness : not to the sensual life of a beast, but to the noble, rational life of a man, and the more noble, heavenly life of a believer : not to an unprofitable, worldly toil, but to the most gainful employment that ever the sons of men were acquainted with : not to the deceitful drudgery of sin, but to that "godliness which is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8. Sirs, do you know what a life of holiness is? You do not know it, if you turn away from it : I am sure if you knew it, you would never fly from it, no, nor endure to live without it. Why, a life of holiness is nothing but a living unto God, to be conversant with him, as the wicked are with the world, and to be devoted to his service, as sensualists are to the flesh. It is to live in the love of God and our Redeemer ; and in the foretastes of his everlasting glory, and of his love ; and in the sweet forethoughts of that blessed life that shall never end ; and in the honest, self-denying course that leadeth to that blessedness. A godly life is nothing else but a sowing the seed of heaven on earth ; and a learning in the school of Christ, the songs of praise which we must use before the throne of God ; and by suffering, a learning how to triumph and reign with Christ. And is there any thing in this life which you have cause to be afraid of? The sins and weaknesses of the godly are contrary to godliness ; and therefore godliness is no more dishonoured by them, than health and life are dishonoured by your sicknesses. As health is never the worse to be liked, but the better, because of the painful grievousness of sickness, so godliness is to be liked the better, because the very failings of the saints are so grievous. If a true believer do but step out of the way of God, he is wounded, he is out of joint, he is as undone till he come in again ; though it was but in one particular. And can you endure to continue strangers to it altogether so long ? I know you may find faults in the godly, till they are perfect ; but let the most malicious enemy of Christ on earth find any fault in godliness if he can.

Can you delay to come into your Father's family ; into the vineyard of the Lord ; into the kingdom of God on earth,

to be fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; to have the pardon of all your sins, and the sealed promise of everlasting glory? Why, sirs, when you are called on to turn, you are called to the porch of heaven, into the beginning of salvation. And will you delay to accept everlasting life?

3. Consider also, from what you are called to turn; and then judge whether there be any reason of delay. It is from the devil, your enemy; from the love of a deceitful world; from the seducement of corrupted, brutish flesh; it is from sin, the greatest evil. What is there in sin that you should delay to part with it? Is there any good in it? Or what hath it ever done for you that you should love it? Did it ever do you good? Or did it ever do any man good? It is the deadly enemy of Christ and you. That caused his death, and will cause yours, and is working for your damnation, if converting and pardoning grace prevent it not. And are you loath to leave it? It is the cause of all the miseries of the world, of all the sorrow that ever did befall you, and the cause of the damnation of them that perish. And do you delay to part with it?

4. Your delaying shews that you love not God, and that you prefer your sin before him, and that you would never part with it if you might have your will. For if you loved God, you would long to be restored to his favour, and to be near him, and employed in his service, and his family. Love is quick and diligent, and will not draw back. And it is a sign also that you are in love with sin; for else, why would you be so loath to leave it? He that would not leave his sin, and turn to God, till the next week, or next month, or year, would never turn if he might have his desire. For that which makes you desirous to stay a day or week longer, doth indeed make you loath to turn at all. And, therefore, it is but hypocrisy to take on you, that you are willing to turn hereafter, if you be not willing to do it now without delay.

5. Consider, but what a case you are in while you thus delay. Do you think you stand on dry ground, or in a safe condition? If you knew where you are, you would sit as upon thorns, as long as you are unconverted; you would be as a man that stood up to the knees in the sea, and saw the tide coming towards him, who certainly would think that

there is no standing still in such a place. Read what I have said of the state of the unconverted, and in my first "Treatise of Conversion." In a word, you are the drudges of sin, the slaves of the devil, the enemies of God, the abusers of his grace and Spirit, the despisers of Christ, the heirs of hell. And is this a state to stay in an hour? You have all your sin unpardoned; you are under the curse of the law. The wrath of God is upon you; and the fulness of it hangs over your heads. Judgment is coming to pass upon you the dreadful doom; the Lord is at hand; death is at the door, and waits but for the word from the mouth of God, that it may arrest you, and bring you to everlasting misery. And is this a state for a man to stay in?

6. Moreover, your delaying giveth great advantage to the tempter. If you would presently turn and forsake your sins, and enter into a faithful covenant with God, the devil would be almost out of hope, and the very heart of his temptations would be broken. He would see that now it is too late. There is no getting you out of the arms of Christ. But as long as you delay, you keep him still in heart and hope. He hath time to strengthen his prison and fetters, and to renew his snares. And if one temptation serve not, he hath time to try another, and another. As if you would stand as a mark for satan to shoot at, as long as he please. What likelihood is there, that ever so foolish a sinner should be recovered and saved from his sin?

7. Moreover, your delaying is a vile abuse of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and may so far provoke him, as to leave you to yourself, and then you are past help. If you delight so to trample on your crucified Lord, and will so long put him to it by refusing his grace, and grieving his Spirit, what can you expect, but that he should turn away in wrath, and utterly forsake you, and say, "Let him keep his sin, seeing he had rather have it than my grace; let him continue ungodly, seeing he is so loath to be sanctified; let him take his own course, and die in his sin, and repent in hell, seeing he would not repent on earth?" You provoke Christ thus to give you up.

8. Consider also, I beseech you, if you ever mean to turn, what it is that you stay for. Do you think to bring down Christ and heaven to lower rates, and to be saved hereafter with less ado? Sure you cannot be so foolish.

For God will be still the same, and Christ the same, and his promise hath still the same condition, which he will never change; and godliness will be the same, and as much against your carnal interest hereafter as it is now. When you have looked about you never so long, you will never find a fairer or nearer way; but this same way you must go, or perish. If you cannot leave sin now, how should you leave it then? It will be still as sweet to yourself as now. Or if one sin grow stale by the decay of nature, another that is worse will spring up in its stead, and though the acts abate, they will all live still at the root; for sin was never mortified by age. So that if ever you will turn, you may best turn now.

9. Yea, more than that, the longer you stay, the harder it will be. If it be hard to-day, it is like to be harder to-morrow. For as the Spirit of Christ is like to forsake you for your wilful delays, so custom will strengthen sin; and custom in sinning will harden your hearts, and make you as past feeling, to work all uncleanness with greediness; Eph. iv. 19. Cannot you crush this serpent when it is but in the spawn, and can you encounter it in its serpentine strength? Cannot you pluck up a tender plant, and can you pluck up an oak or cedar? O sinners! what do you do, to make your recovery so difficult by delay? You are never like to be fairer for heaven, and to find conversion an easier work than now you may do. Will you stay till the work be ten times harder, and yet do you think it so hard already?

10. Consider also, That sin gets daily victorious by your delay. We lay our batteries against it, and preach, and exhort, and pray against it, and it gets a kind of victory over all, as long as we prevail not with you to turn. It conquereth our persuasions and advice; it conquereth all the stirrings of your consciences; it conquereth all your heartless purposes, and deceitful promises. And these frequent conquests do strengthen your sin, and weaken your resistance, and leave the matter almost hopeless. Before a physician hath used remedies, he hath more hope of a cure, than when he hath tried all means, and finds that the best medicines do no good, but the man is still as bad or worse. So when all means have been tried with you, and yet you are unconverted, the case draws towards desperation itself. The very means are disabled more than before; that is, your hearts

are unapter to be wrought upon by them. When you have long been under sermons, and reading, and among good examples, and yet you are unconverted, these ordinances lose much of their force with you. Custom will make you slight them, and be dead-hearted under them. And it is these very same means and truths that you have frustrated, that must do the work, or it will never be done. The same plaister must heal you that you have thrown off so oft. And what a sad case is this, that there is no hope left, but in the very same medicine which you have taken so oft in vain?

11. Moreover, age itself hath many inconveniences, and youth hath many great advantages, and, therefore, it is folly to delay. In age the understanding and memory grows dull, and people grow incapable, and almost unchangeable. We see, by our every day's experience, that men think they should not change when they are old, that opinion or practice that they have been brought up in, they think that they should not then forsake it. To learn when they are old, and to turn when they are old, you see how much they are against it. Besides, how unfit is age to be at that pains, that you can undergo. How unfit to begin the holy warfare against the flesh, the world, and the devil. God's way is, to list his soldiers as soon as may be, even in their infancy, which they must own as soon as ever they come to age. And the devil would not have it done at all, and, therefore, he would have it put off as long as may be. In infancy he will tell the parents, with the Anabaptists, 'It is too soon to be dedicated to God, and entered into covenant.' When they come to their childhood, and youthful state, he will then persuade them, that it is yet too soon; and when he can no longer persuade them that it is yet too soon, he will then persuade them that it is too late. O what a happy thing it is to come unto God betimes, and with the first! What advantage hath youth! They have the vigour of wit, and of body. They be not rooted and hardened in it, not filled with prejudice and obstinacy against godliness, as others be. Besides, the capacity of serving God, of which anon.

12. You have such times of advantage and encouragement, as few ages of the world have ever seen, and few nations on earth do enjoy at this day. What plain and plentiful teaching have you? What abundance of good examples, and the society of the godly? Private and public helps

are common. Godliness is under as little suffering as ever you can expect to see it; yea, it is grown into reputation among us, so that it is an honour to serve God, and a dishonour to neglect it, (as well it may). Our rulers countenance the practices of godliness; they proclaim themselves the forward professors and patrons of it, and take this as their glory. And this is not ordinary in the world. Seldom hath the church seen such days on earth. And yet is not the way to heaven fair enough for you? Yet are you not ready to turn to God? When should men make hay, but when the sun shines? Will you delay till this harvest-time be over, and the winter of persecution come again? Can you better turn to God, when a godly life is the common scorn of the country, as it was a while ago; and when every one will be deriding and railing at you? Or when it may possibly cost you your lives? Have you sun, and wind, and tide to serve you, and will you stay to set out in storms and darkness?

13. Moreover, Your delay doth cast your conversion and salvation upon hazard, yea, upon many and grievous hazards. And is your everlasting happiness a matter to be wilfully hazarded, by causeless and unreasonable delays? (1.) If you delay to-day, you are utterly uncertain of living till to-morrow. If you put by this one motion, you know not whether ever you shall have another. Alas! that ever the heart of man should be so senseless, as to delay, when they know not but it may prove their damnation, and when heaven or hell must certainly follow; that they dare put off a day or hour, when they know not whether ever they shall see another. (2.) And as your life is uncertain, so are the means uncertain by which God useth to do the work. He may remove your teachers, and other helps; and then you will be further off than before. (3.) And if both should continue, yet grace itself is uncertain. You know not whether ever the Spirit of God will put another thought of turning into your hearts; or at least, whether he will give you hearts to turn.

14. Moreover, The delay of conversion continueth your sin, and so you will daily increase the number, and increase your guilt, and make your souls more abundantly miserable. Are you not deep enough in debt to God already, and have you not sin enough to answer for upon your souls? Would

you fain have one year's sin more, or one day's sin more to be charged upon you? O if you did but know what sin is, it would amaze you to think what a mountain lieth already upon your consciences. One sin unpardoned will sink the stoutest sinner into hell. And you have many a thousand upon your souls already, and would you yet have more? Methinks you should rather look about you, and bethink you how you may get a pardon for all that is past.

15. And as this sin increaseth daily by delay, so consequently the wrath of God increaseth; you will run further into his displeasure; and possibly you may cut down the bough that you stand upon, and hasten even bodily destruction to yourselves. When you live daily upon God, and are kept out of hell by a miracle of his mercy, methinks you should not desire yet longer to provoke him, lest he withdraw his mercy, and let you fall into misery.

16. And do but consider, what will become of you, if you be found in these delays. You are then lost, body and soul, for ever. Now if you had but hearts to know what is good for you, the worst of you might be converted and saved; for God doth freely offer you his grace. But if you die in your delays, in the twink of an eye, you will find yourselves utterly undone for ever. Now there is hope of a change, but when delays have brought you to hell, there is no more change, nor any more hope.

17. Consider, That your very time which you lose by these delays, is an inconceivable loss. When time is gone, what would you then give for one of those years, or days, or hours, which you now foolishly trifle away! O wretched sinners! are there so many thousand souls in hell, that would give a world if they had it, for one of your days, and yet can you afford to throw them away in worldliness, and sensuality, and loitering delays? I tell you, time is better worth, than all the wealth and honours of the world. The day is coming, when you will set by time; when it is gone, you will know what a blessing you made light of. But then all the world cannot call back one day or hour of this precious time, which you can sacrifice now to the service of your flesh, and cast away on unprofitable sinning.

18. Consider also, That God hath given you no time to spare. He hath not lent you one day or hour, more than is needful for the work that you have to do, and therefore you

have no reason to lose any by your delays. Do you imagine that God would give a man an hour's time for nothing? much less for to abuse him and serve his enemy? No, let me tell you, that if you make your best of every hour, if you should never lose a minute of your lives, you would find all little enough for the work you have to do. I know not how others think of time, but for my part, I am forced daily to say, 'How swift, how short is time; and how great is our work; and when we have done our best, how slowly goeth it on!' O precious time! What hearts have they, what lives do those men lead, that think time long; that have time to spare, and pass it in idleness!

19. To convince you more, consider I beseech you, The exceeding greatness of the work you have to do; and tell me then, whether it be time for you to delay. Especially you that are yet unconverted, and strangers to the heavenly nature of the saints, you have far more to do than other men. You have a multitude of headstrong passions to subdue, and abundance of deadly sins to kill, and rooted vices to root up: you have many a false opinion of God and his ways, to be plucked up, and the customs of many years' standing to be broken: you have blind minds that must be enlightened with heavenly knowledge; and abundance of spiritual truths that are above the reach of flesh and blood, that you must needs learn and understand: you have much to know, that is hard to be known: you have a dead soul to be made alive, and a hard heart to be melted, and a seared conscience to be softened and made tender, and the guilt of many thousand sins to be pardoned: you have a new heart to get, and a new end to aim at and seek after, and a new life to live; abundance of enemies you have to fight with and overcome; abundance of temptations to resist and conquer. Many graces to get, and preserve, and exercise, and increase, and abundance of holy works to do for the service of God, and the good of yourselves and others. O what a deal of work doth every one of these words contain; and yet what abundance more might I name! And have you all this to do, and yet will you delay? And they are not indifferent matters that are before you; it is no less than the saving of your souls, and the obtaining the blessed glory of the saints. Necessity is upon you: these are things that must be done, or else woe to you that ever you were born: and yet have

you another day to lose? Why sirs, if you had a hundred miles to go in a day or two, upon pain of death, would you delay? O think of the work that you have to do, and then judge whether it be not time to stir!

20. And methinks it should exceedingly terrify you to consider, what abundance by such delays do perish; and how few that wilfully delay are ever converted and saved. Many a soul that once had purposes hereafter to repent, is now in misery, where there is no repentance, that will do them any good. For my part, though I have known some very few converted when they are old; yet I must needs say, both that they were very few indeed, and that I had reason to believe, that they were such that had sinned before in ignorance, and did not wilfully put off repentance, when they were convinced that they must turn. Though I doubt not but God may convert even these if he please, yet I cannot say that I have ever known many, if any such, to be converted. Sure I am that God's usual time is in childhood or youth, before they have long abused grace, and wilfully delayed to turn when they were convinced. Some considerable time I confess many have before their first convictions and purposes be brought to any great ripeness of performance; but O how dangerous is it to delay!

21. Consider also, Either conversion is good or bad for you: either it is needful or unnecessary. If it be bad, and a needless thing, then let it alone for altogether. But if you are convinced that it is good and necessary, is it not better now, than to stay any longer? Is it not the sooner the better? Are you afraid of being safe, or happy too soon? If you are sick, you care not how soon you are well: if you have a bone out, you care not how soon it is set: if you fall into water, you care not how soon you get out: if your house be on fire, you care not how soon it be quenched: if you are but in fears by any doubts, or ill-tidings, you care not how soon your fears be over. And yet are you afraid of being too soon out of the power of the devil, and the danger of hell; and of being too soon the sons of God, and the holy, justified heirs of heaven?

22. Consider also, Either you can turn now or not. If you can, and yet will not, you are utterly without excuse. If you cannot to-day, how much less will you be able hereafter, when strength is less, and difficulties greater, and bur-

dens more? Is it not time therefore, to make out to Christ for strength, and should not the very sense of your disability dissuade you from delay?

23. Consider, How long you have staid already, and put God's patience to it by your folly; hath not the devil, the world and the flesh, had many years time of your life already? Have you not been long enough swallowing the poison of sin? And long enough been abusing the Lord that made you, and the blood of the Son of God, that was shed for you, and the Spirit of grace, that hath moved and persuaded you? Are you not yet gone far enough from God, and have you not yet done enough to the damning of yourselves, and casting away everlasting life? O wretched sinners, it is rather time for you to fall down on your faces before the Lord, and with tears and groans, to lament it day and night, that ever you have gone so far in sin, and delayed so long to turn to him as you have done. Sure, if after so many years' rebellion, you are yet so far from lamenting it, that you had rather have more of it, and had rather hold on a little longer no wonder if God forsake you, and let you alone.

24. Have you any hopes of God's acceptance, and your salvation, or not? If you have such hopes, that when you turn, God will pardon all your sins, and give you everlasting life, is it think you an ingenuous thing to desire to offend him yet a little longer, from whom you expect such exceeding mercy and glory as you do? Have you the faces to speak what is in your hearts and practice, and to go to God with such words as these? 'Lord I know I cannot have the pardon of one sin, without the blood of Christ, and the riches of thy mercy; nor can I be saved from hell without it; but yet I hope for all this from thy grace; I beseech thee let me live a little longer in my sins, a little longer let me trample on the blood of Christ, and despise thy commands, and abuse thy mercies; a little longer let me spit in the face of thy goodness, and prefer the flesh and the world before thee, and then pardon me all that ever I did, and take me into glory.' Could you forshame put up such a request to God as this? If you could, you are past shame; if not, then do not practise and desire that, which you cannot for shame speak out and request.

25. Moreover, it is an exceeding advantage to you, to come in to God betimes, and an exceeding loss that you will

suffer by delay, if you were sure to be converted at last. If you speedily come in, you may have time to learn, and get more understanding in the matters of God, than else can be expected ; for knowledge will not be had but by time and study. You may also have time to get strength of grace, when young beginners can expect no more than an infant's strength ; you may grow to be men of parts and abilities, to be useful in the church, and profitable to those about you, when others cannot go or stand, unless they lean on the stronger for support. If you come in betime, you may do God a great deal of service ; which in the evening of the day, you will neither have strength nor time to do. You may have time to get assurance of salvation, and to be ready with comfort when death shall call ; when a weakling is like to be perplexed with doubts and fears, and death is like to be terrible, because of their unreadiness.

26. And did you ever consider, who and how many do stay for you while you delay ? Do you know who it is that you make to wait your leisure ? God himself stands over you with the offers of his mercy, as if he thought it long till you return, saying, " O that there were such a heart in them ; and when will it once be ? How long ye simple will ye love simplicity, and scorers delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge ? Turn ye at my reproof ;" Deut. v. 29. Jer. xiii. 17. Prov. i. 22. And do you think it wise, or safe, or mannerly, for you to make the God of heaven to wait on you, while you are serving his enemy ? Can you offer God a baser indignity, than to expect that he should support your lives, and feed you, and preserve you, and patiently forbear you, while you abuse him to his face, and drudge for the flesh, the world, and the devil ? Should a worm thus use the Lord that made him ? You will not yourselves hold a candle in your hands, while it burns your own fingers ; nor will you hold a nettle or a wasp in your hand to sting you ; nor will you keep a dog in your house, that is good for nothing but to snarl at you, and bite your children, and worry your sheep ; and yet God hath long held up your lives, while instead of light, you have yielded nothing but a stinking snuff ; and instead of grapes, you have brought forth nothing but thorns and thistles ; and while you have snarled at his children, and his flock, and done the worst you could against

him. And would you indeed put God to wait on you thus, while you serve the devil yet one day more? Must God as it were, hold the drunkard the candle while he reels and spews? Must he draw the curtain, while the filthy wretch doth once more please his fleshly lusts? Marvel not, if he withdraw his supporting mercy, and let such wretches drop into hell.

And it is not God only, but his servants, and creatures, and ordinances, that all are waiting on you. The angels stay for the joy that is due to them upon your conversion. Ministers are studying, and preaching, and praying for you. Godly neighbours are praying and longing for your change. The springs and rivers are flowing for you; the winds blow for you; the sun shines for you; the clouds rain for you; the earth bears fruit for you; the beasts must labour, and suffer, and die for you; all things are doing, and would you stand still, or else do worse? What haste makes the sun about the world, to return in its time to give you light! What haste make other creatures in your service! And yet must you delay? Must God stay, and Christ, and the Spirit stay? Must angels stay, must ministers stay, must the godly stay, and the ordinances stay, and all the creatures stay your leisure, while you are abusing God and your souls, and others, and while you delay, as if it were too soon to turn?

27. Consider, That when you were lost, the Son of God did not delay the work of your redemption. He presently undertook it, and turned by the stroke of damning justice. In the fulness of time he came and performed what he undertook; he failed not one day of his appointed time. And will you now delay to accept the benefit, and turn to him? Must he make such haste to save you at so dear a rate, and now will you delay to be saved?

28. Moreover, God doth not delay to do you good. You have the day and night in their proper seasons; the sun doth not fail to rise upon you at the appointed time; you have the spring and harvest in their meetest seasons, the former and latter rain in season. When you are in want you have seasonable supplies; and when you are in danger, you have seasonable deliverance: and is it meet or equal that you should refuse to bring forth seasonable fruit, but still be putting off God with your delays?

29. Moreover, When you are in trouble and necessity, you are then in haste for deliverance and relief. Then you think every day a week, till your danger or suffering be past. If you be under the pain of a disease, or in danger of death, or under poverty, oppression, or disgrace, you would have God relieve you without delay; and yet you will not turn to him without delay. Then you are ready to cry out, 'How long, Lord, how long till deliverance come!' But you will not hear God when he crieth to you in your sins, 'How long will it be ere you turn from your transgressions, when shall it once be?' When you are to receive any outward deliverance, you care not how soon, the sooner the better; but when you are to turn to God, and receive his grace and title to glory, then you care not how late, as if you had no mind of it. Can you for shame beg of God to hasten your deliverances, when you remember your delays, and still continue to trifle with him, and draw back?

30. Your present prosperity, and worldly delights, are posting away without delay; and should you delay to make sure of better in their stead? Time is going, and health is going, youth is going, yea, life is going; your riches are taking wing, your fleshly pleasures do perish in the very using; your meat and drink is sweet to you little longer than it is in your throat. Shortly you must part with house and lands, with goods and friends, and all your mirth and earthly business will be done. All this you know, and yet will you delay to lay up a durable treasure which you may trust upon, and to provide you a better tenement before you be turned out of this? What will you do for an habitation, for pleasures and contents, when all that you have now is spent and gone, and earth will afford you nothing but a grave? If you could but keep that you have, I should not much wonder, that knowing so little of God and another world, you look not much after it; but when you perceive death knocking at your doors, and see that all your worldly comforts are packing up, and hasting away, methinks if you have your wits and sense about you, you should presently turn, and make sure of heaven, without any more delay.

31. Consider also, Whether it be equal, that you should delay your conversion, when you can seasonably dispatch your worldly business, and when your flesh would be provided for, you can hearken to it without delay. You have

wit enough to sow your seed in season, and will not delay it till the time of harvest : you will reap your corn when it is ripe, and gather your fruit when it is ripe, without delay. You observe the seasons in the course of your labours, day by day, and year by year : you will not lie in bed when you should be at your work, nor delay all night to go to your rest ; nor suffer your servants to delay your business ; you will know your dinner-time and supper-time, day by day ; if you be sick, you will seek help without delay, lest your disease should grow to be incurable. And yet will you delay your conversion, and the making sure of heaven ? Why sirs, shall these trifles be done without delay, and shall your salvation be put off ? In the name of God, sirs, what do you think of ? Do you imagine that you can better suffer hell-fire, than hunger or nakedness ? Or that you can better bear the loss of everlasting joys, than the loss of your commodities and provisions in the world ? Sure, if you believe the life to come, you cannot think so. And can you have while for every thing, except that one thing, which all the rest are merely to promote, and in comparison of which they are all but dreams ? Can you have while to work, to plough, and sow, and reap, and cannot you have while to prepare for eternal life ? Why sirs, if you cannot find time yet to search your hearts, and prepare for death ; turn to God, and give over eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and say, ‘ I cannot have time for these.’ You may as wisely say so for these smaller matters, as the greater.

32. Moreover, if men offer you courtesies, and commodities for your bodies, you will not stand delaying, and need so many persuasions to accept them. If your landlord would for nothing renew your lease, if any man would give you houses, or lands, would you delay so long before you would accept them ? A beggar at your door will not only thankfully take your alms, without your entreaty and importunity, but will beg for it, and be importunate with you to give it. And yet will you delay to accept the blessed offers of grace, which is a greater thing ?

33. Yet consider, that it is God that is the giver, and you that are the miserable beggars and receivers : and therefore it is fitter that you should wait on God, and call on him for his grace, when he seemeth to delay, and not that he should wait on you. He can live without your receiving, but you

cannot live without his giving. The beggar must be glad of an alms at any time, and the condemned person of a pardon at any time ; but the giver may well expect that his gift be received without delay, or else he may let them go without it.

34. And methinks you should not deal worse with God, when he comes to you as a physician to save your own souls, than you would do with a neighbour or a friend, when it is not for your own good, but for theirs. If your neighbour lay a dying, you would go and visit him without delay : if he fell down in a swoon, you would catch him up without delay : if he fell into the fire or water you would pluck him out without delay : yea, you would do this much by a very beast. And yet will you delay when it is not another, but yourselves, that are sinking and drowning, and within a step of death and desperation ? If a woman be but in travail, her neighbours will come to her without delay ; and yet when their souls are in bondage to sin and satan, and a state of death, they will let them lie there, year after year, and when we desire them to be converted, here is nothing but delays.

35. If yet you perceive not how unreasonable you deal with God and your souls, I beseech you consider whether you do not deal worse with him, than you do with the devil himself. If satan or his servants persuade you to sin, you delay not so long but you are presently at it. You are ready to follow every tippling companion or gamester that puts up the finger : you are ready to go as they invite you : the very sight of the cup doth presently prevail with the drunkard, and the sight of his filthy mate prevaieth with the fornicator ; and sin can be presently entertained without delay. But when God comes, when Christ calls, when the Spirit moveth, when the minister persuadeth, when conscience is convinced, we can have nothing after all but wishes and purposes, and promises, with delays. O what a stomach hath that man, or what a brain, that will snatch at poison, and swallow dung and dirt with greediness, without any chewing : and when you offer him meat, stands sighing and looking at it, and hardly will be persuaded to put it in his mouth, and if he do, he is chewing it so long, that at last he even spits it out again, and cannot get it down. Thus deal ungodly wretches, between their poisonous sins, and the saving means and grace of Christ.

Nay, more than this, so eager are they on their sin, that

we are not able to entreat them to delay it. When the passionate man is but provoked, we cannot persuade him to delay his railing language so long as to consider first of the issue. We cannot entreat the drunkard to put off his drunkenness but for one twelve-month, while he trieth another course : all the ministers in the country, cannot persuade the worldling to forbear his worldliness, and the proud persons their pride, and the ungodly person his ungodliness, for the space of one month, or week, or day. And yet when God hath a command, and a request to them, to turn to him, and be saved, here they can delay without our entreaty.

36. Consider also, that it is not possible for you to turn too soon ; nor will you ever have cause to repent of your speediness. Delay may undo you, but speedy turning can do you no harm. I wonder what hurt you think it can do you, to be quickly reconciled to God ! And why then should there be any delay, where it is not possible to be too hasty ? Do you think that there is ever a saint in heaven, yea, or on earth, that is sorry that he staid not longer unconverted ? No, you shall never hear of such a repentance from the mouth of any that is indeed converted.

37. But I must tell you on the contrary side, that if ever you be so happy as to be converted, you will repent it, and an hundred times repent it, that you delayed so long before you yielded. O how it will grieve you when your hearts are melted with the love of God, and are overcome with the infinite kindness of his pardoning, saving grace ; that ever you had the hearts to abuse such a God, and deal so unkindly with him, and stand out so long against that compassion that was seeking your salvation ! O how it will grieve your hearts to consider, that you have spent so much of your lives in sin, for the devil, and the flesh, and the deceitful world ! O you would think with yourselves, ‘ Was not God more worthy of my youthful days ? Had I not been better to have spent it in his service and the work of my salvation ? Alas ! that I should waste such precious days, and now be so far behindhand as I am ! Now I want that faith, that hope, that love, that peace, that assurance, that joy in the Holy Ghost which I might have had if I had spent those years for God, which I spent in the service of the world and the flesh. Then I might have had the comfort of a well-spent life, and with joy have now looked back upon those

days, and seen the good I have done to others, and the honour I had brought to God ; whereas I must now look back upon all those years with sorrow, and shame, and anguish of mind.' You will think to yourselves then a hundred times, ' O that I had but that time again to spend for God, which I spent for sin, and to use for my soul, which I wasted for my brutish flesh !' Believe it, sirs, if ever you be converted, you must look for these repenting sorrows for all your delays, (and that is the best that can come of it). And who would now wilfully make work for sorrow ?

38. And I pray you consider, whether it belongs of right to God or you, to determine of the day and hour of your coming in ? It is he that must give you the pardon of your sins : and doth it not then belong to him to appoint the time of your receiving it ? You cannot have Christ and life without him. It is he that must give you the kingdom of heaven ; and is he not worthy then to appoint the time of your conversion, that you may be made partakers of it ? But if he say, ' To-day,' dare you say, ' I will stay till to-morrow ?'

39. Nay, consider whether God or you be likelier to know the meetest time. Dare you say that you know better when to turn than God doth ? I suppose you dare not. And if you dare not say so, for shame let not your practice say so. God saith, " To-day, while it is called to-day, hear my voice, and harden not your hearts." And dare you say, ' It is better to stay one month longer, or one day longer ?' God saith, " Behold, this is the accepted time ! Behold, this is the day of salvation ;" 2 Cor. vi. 2. And will you say, ' It is time enough to-morrow ? Do you know better than God ? If your physician do but tell you in a pleurisy, or a fever, you must let blood this day before to-morrow, you will have so much reason as to submit to his understanding, and think that he knows better than you. And cannot you allow as much to the God of wisdom ?'

40. Consider also, that the speediness of your conversion when God first calls you, doth make you the more welcome, and is a thing exceeding pleasing to God. Our proverb is, A speedy gift is a double gift. If you ask any thing of a friend, and he give it you presently, and cheerfully at the first asking, you will think you have it with a good will : but if he stand delaying first, and demurring upon it, you will think you have it with an ill-will, and that you owe him

the smaller thanks. If a very beggar at your door must stay long for an alms, he will think he is the less beholden to you. How much more may God be displeased, when he must stay so long for his own, and that for your benefit? God loveth a cheerful giver, and consequently a cheerful obeyer of his call. And if it be hearty and cheerful, it is the likelier to be speedy without such delays.

41. And I would desire you but to do with God as you would be done by. Would you take it well of your children if they should tear all their clothes, and cast their meat to the dogs, and tread it in the dirt, and when you entreat them to give over, they will not regard you? Would you stand month after month, entreating and waiting on them, as God doth on you, in a more foolish course? Or rather, would you not either soundly whip them, or take their meat from them, till hunger teach them to use it better? If your servant will spend the whole day and year in drinking and playing when he should do your work, will you wait on him all the year with entreaties, and pay him at last, as if he had served you? And can you expect that God should deal so by you?

42. And consider I pray you, that your delay is a denial, and so may God interpret it. For the time of your turning is part of the command. He that saith, 'Turn,' saith, 'Now,' even 'To-day,' without delay. He giveth you no longer day. If time be lengthened, and the offer be made again and again, that is more than he promised you, or you could have promised yourselves. His command is, 'Now, Return and Live.' And if you refuse the time, the present time, you refuse the offer, and forfeit the benefit. And if you knew but what it is to give God a denial in such a case as this, and what a case you were in if he should turn away in wrath, and never come near you more, you would then be afraid of jesting with his hot displeasure, or dallying with the Lord.

43. Methinks you should remember, that God doth not stay thus on all as he doth on you. Thousands are under burning and despair, and past all remedy, while patience is waiting yet upon you. Can you forget that others are in hell at this very hour, for as small sins as those that you are yet entangled, and linger in? Good Lord, what a thing is a senseless heart! That at the same time when millions are in misery for delaying or refusing to be converted, their successors should fiercely venture in their steps. Surely if

faith had but opened your ears, to hear the cries of those damned souls, you durst not imitate them by your delays.

44. And I must tell you, that God will not always thus wait on you, and attend you by his patience, as hitherto he hath done. Patience hath his appointed time. And if you outstay that time, you are miserable wretches. I can assure you, sirs, the glass is turned upon you; and when it is run out, you shall never have an hour of patience more. Then God will no more entreat you to be converted. He will not always stand over you with salvation, and say, 'O that this sinner would repent and live! O that he would take the mercies that I have provided for him!' Do not expect that God should do thus always with you; for it will not be.

45. Your delays do weary the servants of Christ that are employed for your recovery. Ministers will grow weary of preaching to you, and persuading you. When we come to men that were never warned before, we come in hopes that they will hear and obey; and this hope puts life and earnestness into our persuasions. But when we have persuaded men but a few times in vain, and leave them as we found them, our spirits begin to droop and flag. Much more when we have preached and persuaded you many years, and still you are the same, and are but where you were. This dulls a minister's spirit, and makes him preach heavily and coldly, when he is almost out of heart and hope. I do not justify ministers in this, and say, they should do thus. I know they should not; and if they were perfect, I know they would not. But they are but men, and imperfect themselves; and what man is able to be lively and fervent in his work when people stir not, and he sees no good done on the miserable hearers, as if he had the encouragement of success? O when we do but see the hearts of hardened, stubborn sinners relent, and break, and melt before the power of the word; and when we hear them cry out for Christ and mercy, and cry out against themselves for their former folly, and confess their sins, and ask us what they shall do to be saved, and are but willing to be ruled by Christ, the Physician of their souls; this would put life into a preacher that was cold and dull; this would even make a stone to speak. But when we tell men of God's threatenings till they are past believing them, and tell them of God's anger till they

seem to be past fearing it, and tell them of the plague of sin, till they are past feeling; when, instead of preaching men to faith, and repentance, and fear, and tenderness of heart, we preach them into greater unbelief and carelessness, and dead stupidity; this is enough to dull or break the heart of almost any preacher in the world. What man is able to follow so fruitless a work with liveliness? And then it is you that will have the loss and danger of it: when you have dried the breasts the child may famish. If your preachers could not awake, and change you with all their convincing arguments and fervency, how quietly may you sleep on, when you have flattened them by discouragements. If satan can either dismount, or make useless these cannons that were wont to batter his garrison, he may then possess your souls in peace. You talk against persecutors that silenced ministers; but O, sirs, it is you that are our greatest persecutors, that refuse and delay to yield to the calls of Christ by our ministry, and make us labour so much in vain. Though it be not vain as to our own souls, yet you make it in vain as to yours. When we have studied till we almost break our brains, and preached till we have quite broke our strength, and we are consumed, and worn away with labour and bodily pains that it procureth, then you come after, and make us requital by breaking our hearts by your delays, and refusing to turn and live. Truly, sirs, I must tell you for my own part, that if it had not been for those that gave me better encouragement by their obedience, I should never have held out with you a quarter of this time. If all had profited as little as some, and all had stuck as fast in an unconverted state as some; if the humble, penitent, obedient ones among you had not been my comfort and encouragement under Christ, I had been gone from you many a year ago, I could never have held out till now. Either my corruption would have made me run away with Jonas, or my judgment would have commanded me to shake off the dust off my feet, as a witness against you, and depart. But to what end do I speak all this to you? to what end? Why, to let you see how you abuse both God and man by your delays and disobedience. You cannot possibly do us, that are your teachers, a greater injury or mischief than by thus delaying your own happiness. Are our studies and our labours worth nothing, think you? Are our watchings and

waiting worth nothing? Are our prayers, and tears, and groans to be despised? God will not despise them if you do. Believe it, he will set them all on your score, and you will one day have a heavy reckoning of them, and pay full dear for them. Is it equal dealing with us, that when we are watching for your souls, as men that must know we must give an account, you should rob us of our comfort, and make us do it with sighs and sorrow? Heb. xiii. 17. Yea, that you should undo all that we are doing, and make us lose our labour and hopes. And yet do you not think to pay for this? I tell you again, unconverted sinners, we are wearied with your delays. Many years we have been persuading you but to turn and live, and yet you are unturned; you have been convinced long, and thinking on it, and wishing long, and talking of it, and promising long, and yet it is undone, and here is nothing but delays. We see while you delay, death takes away one this week, and another the next week, and you are passing into another world apace; and yet those that are left behind will take no warning, but still delay. We see that satan delays not while you delay. He is day and night at work against you. If he seem to make a truce with you, it is that he may be doing secretly while you suspect him not. We see that sin delayeth not while you delay. It is working like poison, or infection in your bodies, and seizing upon your vital powers; it is every day blinding you more and more; it is hardening your hearts more, and searing up your consciences to bring you past all feeling and hope. And must we stand by and see this miserable work with our people's souls, and all be frustrate, and rejected by themselves, that we do for their deliverance? How long must we stand by with the light in our hands, while you are serving the flesh, and neglecting that which we are sent to call you to? It is not our business to hold you the candle to play by, or to sleep by, or to sin by; these are works that better agree with the dark. But God sent us to you on another message; even to light you out of your sins to him, that you might be saved. Truly, beloved hearers, I must needs say, that the time seems long, and very long to me, that I have been preaching so many years to you for conversion, and for a holy, heavenly life, even since I first knew you, and that yet so many of you are drowned in sin, and ignorance, and are unconverted, when I think your very

consciences tell you that it is a thing that must be done. I tell you all these years do seem to me a long time to wait on you in vain. Blessed be the Lord, that it hath not been in vain with some, or else I would scarce preach any more than one other sermon to you, even to bid you farewell. I pray you deal but fairly with us, and tell us whether ever you will turn or not; if you will not, but are resolved for sin and hell, say so, that we may know the worst; speak out your minds, that we may know what to trust to; for if we once knew you would not turn, we would soon have done with you, and leave you to the justice of God. But if still you say, you will turn, when will you do it? You will do it, and you hope you shall; but when? How long would you have us wait yet? Have you not abused us enough? Nay, I must tell you, that you even weary God himself, it is his own expression; Mal. ii. 17. Isa. xliii. 24. "Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities;" Isa. i. 14. And I must say to you as the prophet, "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you will weary my God also;" Isa. vii. 13. Consider what it is that you do.

46. Consider also, that you are at a constant unspeakable loss every day and hour that you delay your conversion. O how little do you know what you deprive yourselves of every day! If a slave in the galleys, or prison, might live at court as the favourite of the prince, in honour, and delight, and ease, would he delay either years, or hours? Or would he not rather think with himself, 'Is it not better to be at ease, and in honour, than to be here? As the prodigal said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" All this while I might be in plenty, and delight.' All the while that you live in sin, you might be in the favour of God, in the high and heavenly employments of the saints; you might have the comforts of daily communion with Christ, and with the saints; you might be laying up for another world, and might look death in the face with faith and confidence, as one that cannot be conquered by it; you might live as the heirs of heaven on earth, All this, and more than this, you lose by your delays. All the mercies of God are lost upon you. Your food and raiment, your health and wealth, which you set so much by, all is but lost, and worse than lost, for they turn to your greater hurt. All our pains with you, and all

the ordinances of God, which you possess, and all your time, is lost, and worse. And do you think it, indeed, a wise man's part, to live any longer at such a loss as this, and that wilfully, and for nothing? If you knew your loss you would not think so.

47. Nay more, you are all this while doing that which must be undone again, or you will be undone for ever. You are running from God, but you must come back again, or perish when all is done. You are learning a hundred carnal lessons and false conceits, that must be all unlearned again; you are shutting up your eyes in wilful ignorance, which must be opened again. You must learn the doctrine of Christ, the great Teacher of the church, if you stay never so long, or else you shall be cut off from his people: Acts iii. 22. vii. 37. When you have been long accustoming yourselves to sin, you must unlearn, and break all those customs again; you are hardening your hearts daily, and they must again be softened. And I must tell you, though a little time and labour may serve to do mischief, yet it is not quickly undone again. You may sooner set your house on fire, than quench it when you have done: you may sooner cut and wound your bodies, than heal them again; and sooner catch a cold, or a disease than cure it. You may quickly do that which must be longer in undoing. Besides, the cure is accompanied with pain: you must take many a bitter draught, in groans or tears of godly sorrow for these delays: the wounds that you are now giving your souls, must smart and smart again, before they are searched and healed to the bottom. And what man of wisdom would make himself such work and sorrow? Who would travel on an hour longer, that knows he is out of the way, and must come back again? Would you not think him a madman that would say, I will go on a little further, and then I will turn back?

I know Mr. Bilney the martyr, was offended with this comparison, because he thought it was against free-grace. But comparisons extend not to every respect: there are two things in your sins to be undone; the one is the guilt, the other is the habit and the power of sin; the first indeed is done away when you are converted, but at the cost of Christ, which should not be made light of; and yet some scars may be left behind, and such twigs of God's rod may fall upon

you as shall make you wish you had come sooner in. And for the habit of sin, though conversion break the heart of it, yet will it live and trouble you while you live: and those sins that now you are strengthening by your delays, will be thorns in your sides, and rebels in your country, and give you work as long as you live. And thus I may well say, that you are doing that while you delay, that must be long in undoing, and will not be undone so easily as it is done; and you are going on that way, that must be all trod backward.

48. And methinks if it were but this, it should terrify you from your delays, that it is likely to make your conversion more grievous, if you should have so great mercy from God, as after all to be converted. There are very few escape that are so exceeding long in travail; but if you come to the birth, it is like to be with double pain. For God must send either some grievous affliction to fire and frighten you out of your sins, or else some terrible gripes of conscience that shall make you groan and groan again, in the feeling of your folly. The pangs and throes of conscience, in the work of conversion, are far more grievous in some, than in others. Some are even on the rack, and almost brought beside their wits, and the next step to desperation, with horror of soul, and the sense of the wrath of God; so that they lie in doubts and complaints many a year together, and think that they are even forsaken of God. And to delay your conversion, is the way to draw on either this or worse.

49. Consider also, That delays are contrary to the very nature of the work, and the nature of your souls themselves. If indeed, you ever mean to turn, it is a work of haste, and violence, and diligence, that you must needs set upon. "You must strive to enter in, for the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able;" Luke xxxiii. 24, 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he shall answer, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;" ver. 27. It is a race that you are to run, and heaven is the prize. "And you know that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize; and therefore you must so run, as that you may win

and obtain ;” 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. And what is more contrary to this than delay ? You are soldiers in fight, and your salvation lieth on the victory ; and will you trifle in such a case, when death or life is even at hand ? You are travellers to another world, and will you stay till the day is almost past before you will begin your journey ? Christianity is a work of that infinite consequence, and requireth such speedy and vigorous dispatch, that delay is more unreasonable in this than any thing in the world.

And besides, your souls are spirits of an excellent, active nature, that will not be kept idle : and therefore delay is unsuitable to their excellency. The best and noblest creatures are most active : the basest are most dull, and unfit for action. The earth will stand still : you may easily keep clods and stones from moving ; but fire and winds that are purer things, and the sun, and such nobler, sublimer creatures, you are not able to keep idle for an hour. Who can cause the sun to delay its course ? or who can stay the ascending flames ? And therefore to your more excellent, immortal souls, and that in a work that must needs be done, how exceeding unsuitable are delays !

50. If all this will not serve turn, let me tell you, That while you are delaying, your judgment doth not delay ; and that when it comes, these delays will multiply your misery, and the remembrance of them will be your everlasting torment. Whatever you are thinking of, or whatever you are doing, your dreadful doom is drawing on apace, and misery will overtake you before you are aware. When you are in the alehouse, little thinking of damnation, even then is your damnation coming in haste ; when you are drowned in the pleasures, or cares of the world, your judgment is still hastening : you may delay, but it will not delay. It is the saying of the Holy Ghost, (2 Pet. ii. 3.) “ Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” You may slumber, and that so carelessly that we cannot awake you, but your damnation slumbereth not, nor hath done of a long time, while you thought it slumbered ; and when it comes it will awaken you. As a man that is in a coach on the road, or a boat on the water, whatever he is speaking, or thinking, or doing, he is still going on, and hastening to his journey’s end, or going down the stream : so whatever you think, or speak, or do, whether you believe

it, or mock at it, whether you sleep or wake, whether you remember it, or forget it, you are hastening to damnation, and you are every day a day nearer to it than before ; and it is but a little while till you shall feel it. “ Behold, the Judge standeth before the door !” James v. 9. The Holy Ghost hath told you, “ The Lord is at hand ;” Phil. iv. 5. “ The day is at hand :—the time is at hand :—the end of all things is at hand ;” Rom. xiii. 12. Rev. xxii. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 7. “ Behold, saith the Lord, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be ;” Rev. xxii. 12. And do you, as it were, see the Judge approaching, and damnation hastening on, and yet will you delay ?

And withal consider, that when it comes, it will be most sore to such as you ; and then what thoughts do you think you shall have of these delays ? You are unable to conceive how it will torment your consciences, when you see that all your hopes are gone, to think what you have brought yourselves to, by your trifling ; to feel yourselves in remediless misery, and remember how long the remedy was offered you, and you delayed to use it, till it was too late. To see that you are shut out of heaven, and remember that you might have had it as well as others, but you lost it by delay. O then it will come with horror in your mind, ‘ How oft was I persuaded, and told of this ? how oft had I inward motions to return ? how oft was I purposed to be holy, and to give up my heart and life unto God ? I was even ready to have yielded ; but I still delayed, and now it is too late.’ Then you shall pay for all your warnings, and all the sermons and motions which you lost.

And now having laid you down no less than fifty moving considerations, if it be possible to save you from these delays, I conclude with this request to you, whoever you be that read these words : That you would but consider of all these reasons, and then entertain them as they deserve. There is not one of them that you are able to gainsay, much less all of them. If after the reading of all these, you can yet believe that you have reason to delay, your understandings are forsaken of God ; but if you are forced to confess that you should not delay, what will you do then ? Will you obey God, and your own consciences, or will you not ? Will you turn this hour without delay ? Take heed of de-

nying it, lest you have never such a motion more. You know not, but God that calls you to it, may be resolved, that it shall be now or never. I do beseech you, yea, as his messenger I charge you in his name, that you delay not an hour longer, but presently be resolved, and make an unchangeable covenant with God, and as ever you would have favour in that day of your distress, delay not now to accept his favour in the day of your visitation. O what a blessed family were that, which, upon the reading of this, would presently say, ‘We have done exceeding foolishly in delaying so great a matter so long. Let us agree together to give up ourselves to God, without any more delay. This shall be the day; we will stay no longer. The flesh, and the world, and the devil, have had too much already. It is a wonder of patience that he hath borne with us so long. We will abuse the patience of God no longer, but begin to be absolutely his this day.’ If this may be the effect of these exhortations, you shall have the everlasting blessing: but if still you delay, I hope I am free from the guilt of your blood.

Direct. XII. The last Direction that I shall give you, for preventing your miscarriage in the work of conversion, is this, ‘Stop not in weak and wavering purposes and faint attempts; but see that you be groundedly, unreservedly, and habitually (or firmly) resolved.’

There are many good thoughts and meanings in the soul before resolution; but you are not truly converted till you are resolved, and thus resolved as is here expressed. Here I shall shew you, *i.* What this resolution is. *ii.* Why it is so necessary. *iii.* I shall urge you to resolve. And *iv.* I shall direct you in it.

i. Resolution is the firm or prevalent determination of the will upon deliberation.

In opening this definition, I shall first shew you how we are led up to resolution by deliberation; and *2.* What is this deliberation of the will.

1. There are several steps, by which the will doth rise up to resolution, which I shall set before you. And first it is presupposed, that in the state of corrupted nature, the soul is unresolved for God, if not (in many that are exceeding wicked) resolved against him. At first the sinner doth ei-

ther resolve to be as he is, or else he hath no resolution to return. But God breaks many a wicked resolution, or else woe to the ungodly ; for there were no hope. Many wicked wretches have not only neglected their souls, but also resolved that they would never lead a holy life, nor ever join themselves to the communion of saints, nor ever leave their drunken company, or be so precise, and make so great a matter of sin as the godly do. When we urge them with the plainest words of God, and the most unquestionable reasons, so that they have not a word of sense to speak against it ; when we have told them of the command of God, and told them of the certain danger of their souls, they will plainly tell us that they are resolved never to be so precise. When they have nothing else to say, but nonsense, they will put us off with this, That they are resolved to venture their souls without so much ado. But as resolute as they are, God will break and change their resolution, and make them as much resolved of the clean contrary, if ever he will save them. For woe to them that ever they were born, if he should take them at their word, and resolve as they resolve !

Now in this case there are many degrees that men go through, before they come to be resolved for God.

1. The first thing that usually befalleth such a soul, is, some further light, which shews him that which before he understood not.
2. This light causeth him to begin to doubt whether all be so well with him as he thought it had been ; and whether he were so wise in his former resolutions as he thought himself.
3. When light hath bred these doubtings in his mind, these doubtings breed some fears with him, and he begins to be a little awakened, lest evil be nearer him than he was aware of, and lest the threatenings of God and his ministers should prove true.
4. These fears do drive him to consider of the matter, and to deliberate what he is best to do : to consider whether these things be so or not, and what course he must take if they should prove true.
5. Though sometimes God may bless the very first considerations to be the present means of true conversion, yet that is no usual thing ; but ordinarily the first considerations do help the mind to some slight convictions, so that the man begins to see a great deal more than he did before ; and so much as puts him now past doubt that he was before mistaken, and out of his way.
6. Finding himself in this case

his fears increase, and his grief comes on for his former folly and he finds himself in a miserable case, and at a loss for a remedy. 7. By thus much he is quickened to a purpose or resolution, to hearken to those that can instruct him, and inquire of them that he thinks are in the right, and to use such means as he is acquainted with, to find out what he must do to be saved. And accordingly he goes among good company, and begins to hear more diligently and sensibly, and to mark and regard what he hears and reads, and also to cry to God in prayer for mercy and relief. But all this is but from the natural fear of misery, awakened in him by common preparing grace. 8. In the use of these means of grace, he begins better to understand and relish the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ, and the nature and necessity of true sanctification by the Holy Ghost. And though sometimes these evangelical illuminations may be special saving works at the first, yet it is more usual, especially with us that are bred up under the Gospel, to have a more superficial, common illumination, before the saving light come in. And by this common light, men have at first but a general glimmering and confused knowledge of a Saviour, and of redemption, and of mercy to be had by him. And sometimes they have a distinct knowledge of some parts only of the Christian faith, and sometimes a distinct knowledge and belief of every article; but only superficial, and not savingly effectual. 9. By this general or superficial knowledge of Christ and mercy, a kind of hope ariseth in the heart, that yet there is a possibility of escape, and a kind of comfort answerable to this hope. 10. These hopes are accompanied with some desires to understand yet more of the mystery of the Gospel; and to be made partakers of the saving mercy of which he hath a confused light. 11. And hereupon there is further kindled in the will a purpose or resolution, to go further on in learning, and inquiring into the will of God, and using his means. And 12. This purpose is performed, and means are further used. And thus far the soul is but in preparation, and under the common works of grace, and possibly may fall off and perish. The first degree may be so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the second; or the second so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the third: but the most common stop is at the third degree; when men are a little frightened, they will not follow it on to considera-

tion: and they that follow consideration diligently, do usually speed well, and get through all the rest.

But when the soul is brought thus far, if God will save it, he next proceeds to this much more: (1.) He giveth a clearer light into the soul, which giveth a more distinct, or at least a more piercing, convincing, deep and savoury apprehension of the essentials of Christianity, than he ever had before.

Where note, of this special heavenly light, 1. That being usually the consequent of a more common knowledge, therefore most ordinarily the sum of Christian doctrine is in some manner known before. 2. That it doth not reveal only some one point of faith alone, and then another, and so on; as if we savingly knew one essential point of faith, when we have no saving knowledge of the rest; for that is a contradiction. But finding all these truths received in the mind before by a common knowledge, the special light comes in upon them all at once; and shews us the anatomy of Christianity, or the part of God's image in one frame, as to the essentials. 3. For the understanding of which you must further know, that there is such an inseparable connection of these truths, and such a dependance of one upon another, that it is not possible to know one of them truly, and not know all. For example, believing in Jesus Christ, is an act so inseparable from the rest, that (if the essentials of Christianity be not essential to it) certainly you cannot do this without them. For to believe in Christ, is essentially to believe in him as God and man, two natures in one person, by office, the Mediator, our Redeemer and Saviour, to save us from guilt and sin, from punishment and pollution, and to give us by the Holy Ghost, a holy nature and life, and to give us the forgiveness of sin and everlasting life, and so to restore us to the mutual love of God here, and fruition of him hereafter; and all this as merited and procured by his death, obedience, resurrection, ascension, and intercession for his church. Whether here be all that is essential to Christianity, and absolutely necessary to salvation to be believed, I leave to consideration; but sure I am, that all this is essential to saving, justifying faith. And Christ is not taken as Christ, if he be not thus taken; for the ends thus enter the definition of his relation as the Redeemer, and Saviour, and Lord.

So that the love of God as our felicity and end, and the belief in Christ as the way, are both together in the same mi-

nute of time, which soever of them be first in order of nature ; (which is a question that I dare not here so unseasonably handle).

(2.) Upon this special illumination of the soul, and the special consideration with which it doth concur, the deliberating soul is presently resolved. And in these two acts which always go together, consisteth the special sanctifying work : even in the illumination and estimation of the understanding, and in the true resolution of the will.

2. The determination of the will is its own free act, performed by its natural self-determining power, procured by the special grace of God, (I mean in this special case) it followeth deliberation. While we are unresolved, we deliberate what to resolve upon ; that is, we are considering which is best and most eligible, and which not ; and as we practically judge, we use to determine and to choose. And when this choice after deliberation is peremptory and full, it is called resolution.

So that my meaning is to let you understand, that when the matter of our faith is set open to the soul, it is not a wavering, fickle purpose, that is a saving closure with it, but it must be a firm resolution. Much less will it ever bring a man to heaven, to be thinking and deliberating what to do, as long as he is unresolved. And now I shall prove the necessity of this.

11. Till you are resolved, you are not converted, and that appeareth by these evidences: 1. If you are not firmly resolved, it is certain that you do not firmly believe ; for such as your belief is, such will be the effects of it upon the will. An unsound opinionative belief, will produce but tottering, languishing purposes ; but a firm belief will cause a firm resolution of the will. And if your belief be unsound, you must confess you are unconverted.

2. Moreover, if you do not esteem God above all creatures, and heaven above earth, and Christ and grace above sin, you are certainly unconverted. But if you have such a true estimation, you will certainly have a firm resolution ; for you will resolve for that which you highly esteem.

3. If God have not your firm resolution, he hath not indeed your heart and will ; for to give God your hearts and wills, is principally by firm resolving for him ; and if God have not your hearts, you are surely unconverted.

4. Moreover, if you are not firmly resolved, your affections will not be sincere and steadfast ; for all the affections are such as to their sincerity, as the will is, which doth excite or command them. And nothing is more mutable than the affections in themselves considered ; they will be hot to-day, and cold to-morrow, if they be not rooted in the firm resolution of the will, which is the life of them.

5. Lastly, without a firm resolution, there can be no faithful obedience and execution of the will of God. For if men be not resolved, they will heavily go on, and lazily proceed, and easily come off ; for their hands go to work without their hearts. It is the greatest work in all the world, that God calls you to ; and none but the resolved are able to go through with it. Of which we shall give you a fuller account anon.

III. In the next place, let me entreat you in the fear of God, to look after this great and necessary part of your conversion. There are many degrees of good motions in the mind ; but all that falls short of resolution is unsound. Many are brought to doubt whether all be well with them, and to have some fears thereupon, that yet will not be brought so far as to consider soberly of the matter, and deliberate what is best to be done, and to advise with their ministers for the furthering of their salvation. Many that are persuaded so far as to consider, and deliberate, and take advice, yet go no further than some cold wishes or purposes, which are all overcome by the love of the world, and the power of their sins. Many that do proceed to some kind of practice, do only take a taste or an essay of religion, to try how they can like it ; and begin some kind of outward reformation, without any firm resolution to go through with it : or, if their purposes seem strong, it is but occasioned by something without, and not from a settled habit within. All these are short of a state of special saving grace, and must be numbered with the unconverted.

It is a common and very dangerous mistake, that many are undone by, to think that every good desire is a certain sign of saving grace ; whereas you may have more than bare desires, even purposes, and promises, and some performances, and yet perish for want of resolution and regeneration. Do you think that Judas himself had not some good desires, that followed Christ so long, and preached the Gos-

pel? Do you think that Herod had not some good desires, that heard John so gladly, and did many things accordingly? Agrippa had some good desires, when he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. They that for a time believe, have sure some good desires, and more; Matt. xiii. 20. And so had the young man, that went away sorrowful from Christ, when he could not be his disciple, unless he would part with all that he had; Luke xviii. 23. Matt. xix. 22. And doubtless those had more than good desires, "that had known the way of righteousness, and had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. And so had those, Heb. x. 26, 29. "that had received the knowledge of the truth, and were sanctified by the blood of the covenant;" and those, Heb. vi. 4—6. "that were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." And sure Ananias and Sapphira had more than some good desires, when they sold all, and brought half the price to the apostles.

Believe it, sirs, there are none of your desires or endeavours that will serve turn, to prove you in a state of grace, unless they be accompanied with firm resolution. Be it known to you, that you are unconverted, if you are not habitually resolved. And therefore I must here entreat you all, to put the question close to your hearts, 'Are you resolved, firmly resolved, to give up yourselves and all to Christ, and to be wholly his, and follow his conduct, or are you not?' The question is not, 'What good meanings, or wishes, or purposes you may have;' but, 'Whether you are resolved, and firmly resolved?' Take heed, sirs, what you venture your souls upon: God will not be dallied with, nor be deceived. He will have no unresolved, false-hearted servants.

Before I proceed to urge you further, I shall here tell you what kind of resolution it must be, that will prove a man converted; and then I shall give you such motives as should persuade you to it.

It is not all kinds of resolution that will serve turn; but it is only that which hath these following properties, that will evidence a state of grace.

1. As to the matter, it must be the whole essence of

Christianity, that must be resolved on. It must be no less than a closing with God as your chiefest happiness, to be loved above all, and as your chiefest Lord to be obeyed before all ; and a closing with Jesus Christ as your only Saviour, your Teacher, and your Lord ; to bring your hearts again to God, and reconcile you to him ; and a closing with the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, to make you a holy people, and cleanse you from all your sin of heart and life, and guide you by the ministry, word and ordinances, to everlasting life. Thus must you resolve to deliver up yourselves to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be made a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Should you be never so resolute in some point of religion, and as Ananias to give God half, and to become half religious, and half holy, and half heavenly, this is to be but half Christians, and will not bring you half way to heaven. It is entire Christianity that must be resolved on.

2. You must also be resolved for present obedience, and to turn without any more delay ; and not only resolve to turn to-morrow, or sometime hereafter. No resolution is sincere in this case, if it be but for the future ; if you had rather stay but one day or hour longer in the state of sin, and service of the flesh, you are no true disciples of Christ, though you should be resolved to turn to-morrow.

3. And your resolution must be absolute and peremptory, not only without any secret reserves, but positively against any such reserves. Here it is that hypocrites commonly fall short. They see they must mend, and they are convinced that a holy life is necessary, and they resolve hereupon to change their course, and turn religious, but either it is with this secret reserve, ‘ Provided always that I look to my credit, or estate, or life, whatever I do ; and provided that I go no further in religion than will stand with these ; provided that godliness be not my undoing in the world.’ Or else, if he have not actually such thoughts, he hath them always virtually and habitually : he is not resolved against such reserves ; he hath not considered that Christ will have no disciples that cannot and will not part with all ; and that if he hope for heaven, he must not look for a treasure on earth, but only pass through the world as a traveller, or labour in it as the harvest of the Lord, in expectation of a reward and rest hereafter ; and so resolved to take Christ on these self-

denying terms. But he that will be saved, must be thus resolved; even to sell all, to buy the invaluable pearl; Matt. xiii. 46, 47. To make sure of heaven, though he lose all on earth by it; to lay up his hopes in the life to come, and venture and let go all rather than those hopes; to take Christ absolutely upon his own terms, for better and worse, as being certain that there is no other way to life, and that there is no danger of losing by him. The hypocrite is like a man that when he delivereth up possession of his house, will make his bargain that he will keep this room or that room to himself, for his own use. Or like a servant that will not be hired, but on condition that his master shall not set him to such and such work that he loves not; but Christ will have no such servants; you must deliver up all to him, or he will accept of none; you must give him leave to make his conditions for you, and tell you on what terms you must serve him, and wholly refer the matter to him, even for life itself, and not offer to put conditions upon him, and think to bring him to any terms of yours. It is not true resolution unless it be absolute and unreserved, and against all reserves; yea, and that also as to perseverance; that you resolve to give up yourselves finally as well as totally, not only without any reserve of a revocation, but against any such revocation: it must not be a coming to Christ upon essay, or mere trial that if he like it he will stand to it, but he must make an unchangeable, everlasting covenant; it must be part of your covenant, that you will never revoke it.

4. Moreover, your resolution must be well grounded; you must know what the essentials are of that religion which you resolve on, and you must be moved to it by right and weighty considerations; and go upon reasons that will hold up your resolution. For should you resolve on the most necessary work (as this is) upon mistakes, or wrong, or insufficient, as the will of man, the custom of the country, the reputation of Christianity, or only such like; there is no likelihood that your resolution should endure, and it is not sincere while it doth endure.

5. Your resolution must be accompanied with a sense of your own insufficiency, to stand to it immutably, and execute it faithfully by your own strength; as knowing the corruption and deceitfulness of your own hearts. And it must be strengthened and supported by a confidence or de-

pendence on the sufficiency of Christ, on whose grace and Spirit you must rely, both for the continuing, and the performing of your resolutions; as knowing, that without him you can do nothing, but that you can do all things (necessary) through Christ strengthening you.

6. Lastly, your resolution is not savingly sincere, unless it be habitually. It is a very hard question, how far some moving exhortation, or the approach of death in sickness, may prevail with the unsanctified for an actual resolution; undoubtedly very far. But that is a man's mind and will which is habitually his mind and will. When the very inclination and bent of your will is right, then only is your heart right. A bowl may, by a rub, or bank, be turned contrary to the bias; but when it is over the rub, it will follow the bias again. So the soul is, when hindered from ascending a little while, but when it is got over the stop, it will be mounting upward. A stone will move upwards against its nature, while it is followed by the strength of the hand that cast it; but when the strength is spent, it will quickly fall again. It is not an extraordinary act, that you can try yourselves by, but such a free course and tenor of your lives, as will prove that you have a new nature, or a heart inclined and habituated to God. The main business, therefore, is, to prove that you are habitually resolved. Set all these together now, and you may see what resolution it is that must prove you to be converted. 1. It must be a resolution for all the essence of Christianity, and not only some part. 2. It must be a resolution for present obedience, and not only for some distant time to come. 3. It must be an absolute, peremptory resolution, without and against reserves for the flesh, both total and final, without and against any revocation. 4. It must be soundly grounded, and moved by right principles. 5. It must be joined with a humble sense of your insufficiency, and a dependence on Christ, for continuing and performing it. And 6. It must be habitual, and such as sets right the bent and drift of heart and life. All this is of necessity.

Well, sirs, you see now what you must do; the next question then is, What you will do. A great many of motions God hath made to you, to let go your worldliness and wickedness, and become new creatures, and live to God; and never could you be got to resolve and obey them.

Many thoughts you have had of it, I suppose, and long you have been purposing that, turn you would, but all have come to little or nothing, because you were never fully resolved. I am once more sent to you on this message from God, to see whether yet you will resolve. Whether, after all your trifling delays, and after all your wilful sinning, and abuse of God's patience, against your own knowledge and consciences, you will yet resolve. What say you? Shall God be your Master indeed? And shall Christ be your Saviour and Lord? Shall heaven be your happiness, and have your hearts indeed? Shall holiness be your business indeed, and shall sin be your hatred, and the flesh, and the world be your enemies indeed; and used accordingly, from this day forward without any more ado? I beseech you, sirs, resolve, and fully resolve.

And because I know if we prevail not with you in this, you are undone for ever; and, therefore, I am loath to let you go before we have brought you, if it may be, to resolve; I will give you here some considerations to turn the scales, and if you will but read them, and soberly consider of them, I shall have great hope to prevail with you yet, after all. One would think, that the fifty considerations under the last Direction, might suffice. But lest all should be too little, I will add these following:

1. Consider, I beseech you, what leisure you have had to think of the matter. You have lived many years in the world already, and you have had nothing to do in it, but to seek after true happiness. Even your worldly labours ought to have been all but in order to this; and yet are you unresolved? Alas, sirs, have you lived some twenty, some thirty years and more in the world, and yet are you not resolved? What came you hither for, or what have you to do here? Is it twenty, or thirty, or forty years, since you set out, and should by this time have been far on your journey, and are you yet unresolved whither to go, or which way to go? as if you were newly entering the world, or as if you had never heard of your business. I think so many years are a fair time of consideration, and it is time to be resolved, if you will resolve at all.

2. And I pray you consider, what helps you have had to to have resolved you before this. If you did not know what you had to look after, and which way to take, you should have

inquired ; you had the word of God to advise with ; and many experienced Christians to advise with. You wanted not for the wisest, faithfulest counsellors, if you had been but willing and diligent, certainly you might have been resolved long ago.

3. And consider, I beseech you, what a case it is that you are unresolved in. Is it so hard a question, that all this time, and all these helps cannot resolve you ? What ! whether God, or the flesh should be first obeyed, and loved ? Whether heaven or earth, eternal glory or the transitory pleasures of sin should be preferred ? Whether you should care and labour more to be saved from sin and hell, or from poverty and worldly crosses and reproaches ? These and such like, are the questions to be resolved ; and are these so hard, that all the wit, and all the advice you can have from Scripture and ministers, would not serve turn to help you to a resolution, no, not in twenty or thirty years' time ? O wonderful ! that ever the devil should be able so to be-fool men ! That reasonable creatures should be so phrenetic, that they cannot be resolved whether it be better to be saved, or be damned ? Or whether sin, with hell after it, be better than holiness with heaven after ! The Lord have mercy upon the poor distracted world, and bring some more of them to their wits ! We have wise men, if themselves may be judges, very wise in their own conceit, that know many great matters in the world, and yet do not practically know whether God or the devil be the better master ; whether sin or holiness be the better work, and whether heaven or hell be the better wages ! If they say they know these things, judge by their lives whether they know them practically or not. Resolve they will not for God, and holiness, and heaven, nor against the flesh, the world, and sin, whatever they may be brought to confess to their self-condemnation. Is it not a pitiful case, that such points as these should seem so hard to reasonable men, as to be so long in resolving of them ?

4. And I pray you consider, how horribly by this you disgrace your understandings. You that cannot abide to be derided as sots and fools in the world, do yet abuse yourselves thus grossly, as if there were never greater sots upon the earth. We have proud men that are so high in their own eyes, that they can hardly endure contempt from others,

and love almost none that think but meanly and dishonourably of them ; and yet what a horrible contempt and dishonour do they cast upon themselves. If one of these, our wise neighbours, should study seven years to know whether the sea be fire or water ; whether a mountain be heavy ; whether the fire be hot or cold ; and could not be resolved after so many years consideration, what would you think and say of these wise men ? Why, sirs, it is far grosser folly, I tell you again, it is far grosser folly to be unresolved whether you should be holy or unholy ; which is, in plain English, whether it be better to go to heaven or to hell. For faith and holiness is the way to heaven ; and an unholy life is the way to hell. And if you will needs forsake the way to heaven, you may hope to come thither as long as you will ; but you may as well hope to touch the moon with your finger, or run up and down with a mountain on your backs. And if you will hold on in the way to hell, that is, in an unsanctified state, you may say you hope for all that to escape hell, even as wisely as to leap into the sea, and say, ‘ I hope to escape drowning me, as well as you.’ Sirs, I beseech you, do not abuse God, and abuse Christ, and the Spirit, and Scripture, and withal abuse your immortal souls for I know not what ; for a stinking sin ; for a thing of naught. Your souls are noble creatures, and your understandings are noble faculties. Why will you expose them to be the scorn of satan, and make them so base and sottish as you do ? You can see the folly of a poor drunkard, that will make a beast of himself, and go reeling and talking nonsense about the street for the boys to hoot at him, and make himself the laughing-stock of the town. And, I pray you, why do you not understand, that till you are resolved for a holy, heavenly life, you are all drunk, while you think yourselves to be sober. You are as miserable as the other, and more in this, that yours is in your natures, and theirs is but an accident ; yours is continued, and theirs (in that particular) but by fits. In the name of God, sirs, bethink you, whether you can possibly more disgrace your wits, than to be unresolved of a case as plain as the highway, and which your everlasting salvation or damnation lieth on. If one of you could not, in twenty years, be resolved whether the sun be light or dark, or the day or the night be fitter for rest ; or whether it be better to plough and sow, or let all alone, and hope God will

give you a crop without labour ; would you take this for a wise man ? Again I tell you, your folly is more gross, that cannot all this while be resolved, whether you should cast away your wilful sins, and give up yourselves to Christ, and a holy life, to obtain the glory, and escape the misery that is hard at hand. If you stood up to the neck in water, or stood but in a storm of rain, you would not be so long in deliberating, whether it were better for you to stay there longer or come out. If your finger were but in the fire, you need not so long a deliberation, whether you should take it out. And yet these wise men are under many thousand unpardoned sins, and under the curse of the law of God, and within a step of everlasting fire, and have no way possible to escape, but by conversion, faith, and holiness ; and this God hath told them, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, and yet they are considering of it, whether it be best to come out of it ; and yet they cannot be resolved. Did I say they are considering ? Nay, the Lord be merciful to them, they are so dead-hearted and besotted, that they do not so much as seriously consider of it, but even run on without consideration. Ah, poor wretches ! they are ready to go to another world, and may look every day when the bell tolls for them, and when death will bring them to their endless life, and yet they have not wit enough to resolve whether they should make ready ; no, nor wit enough in their most careless, worldly state, to know that they are unready. Death is coming, and judgment is coming, and the burning wrath of God is coming, and are even at the door ; and yet these wise men are unresolved of that only way that is of absolute necessity to their safety ; they must have more time yet to consider of the matter, whether it be best for them to turn or no. They stand at the very brink of hell ; and yet they must further consider of it, whether it be better to turn back or go on. Nay, they will go on without consideration ! And yet these men would take it heinously, if one should lay hands on them, and carry them to Bedlam, or but tell them of the hundredth part of the sottishness that they are guilty of.

5. And it is further considerable, that these men that are all this while unresolved about their conversion and sanctification, have wit enough to resolve of more doubtful and less necessary matters, without any such advising or delays :

and they are men of ordinary parts and capacities for the matters of this world. They can eat when they are hungry, and drink when they are thirsty, without a twelvemonth's time to advise first on it. They can resolve to go to bed at night, and to rise in the morning, without a year's or a day's deliberation. If they have any thing to buy or sell, they will not deliberate upon it till the market be past; if they have land to plough, or their corn to sow, or reap, or mow, they will not take a twelvemonth's time to pause upon it. They can quickly resolve upon every day's business, their travels, their labours, and all their ordinary affairs. And yet these same men cannot resolve in seven years' time, and seven to that, whether heaven or earth should be more loved and laboured for? Or whether a corruptible flesh, a wicked fancy, a greedy throat, should be pleased before the God of heaven, though the pleasing of them cost them the loss of their salvation?

Why, sirs, a man that is well in his wits, would think that these matters should be more out of doubt than the former, and more speedily resolved on. One would think it should be an easier question, whether you should turn to God and a holy life, for the saving of your immortal souls? than whether you should eat or drink, or sleep, for the preservation of your bodies? For I can, in many cases, bring some reason that should persuade you to forbear eating or drinking, or sleeping for a considerable time. But no man breathing can speak a word of reason (except men's folly should be called reason) that should persuade you to forbear your conversion for a minute. And if you mistake about these bodily matters, the loss may be repaired, at least in the world to come. But if you die before you are resolved, and firmly resolved, to give up your soul and body to Christ, and live a holy, heavenly life, you are undone, body and soul for ever, and all the world can never save you.

O what a strange and horrible thing is it, that a man that hath the wit to manage his affairs as plausibly as any of his neighbours, that can overwit others in the matters of the world; that can govern towns and countries; that is learned in his profession, in law, in physic, in merchandise, in navigation, or any the like: I say that a man of so deep a reach, so plodding and active a wit as this, should yet be unresolved, yea, at thirty or forty years old be unresolved,

whether to be sanctified or unsanctified, whether to be holy and be saved, or be unholy, though God hath expressly said, that such shall not see the face of God; Heb. xii. 14. These are our wise men, these are too many (besides the ignorant countrymen,) of our gentlemen, our worshipful and honourable men, our great scholars, and men of noble or reverend esteem; that yet are unresolved, whether to be saved or to be damned. Though God hath written a Bible to resolve them, and a thousand books are written to resolve them, and preachers are studying and preaching to resolve them; and a thousand mercies are cast into the scales that one would think should help to turn them; and some sharp afflictions are helping to resolve them, and twenty or forty years' certain experience of the vanity of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and honour, and pleasure, and the unprofitableness of sin, one would think should resolve them; yet after all this they are unresolved whether they should presently let go their sin, and whether God or the flesh should be pleased or displeased? If this be the wisdom of these men, the Lord bless me and all his chosen from such wisdom!

6. Nay consider further of your unreasonable wickedness: are not many of your judgments resolved, when yet your hearts and wills are not resolved? I am confident, nay, I am certain it is so: you are at once both resolved and unresolved. What a confusion and war do you thus make in your own souls? The judgment is for one thing, and the will and affections are for another thing. What, are you not led by reason? Will you let out your affections, and lead your lives quite contrary to your knowledge? Would not most of you give it me as your judgments under your hands, that it is a thousand times better to cast away your drunkenness, your filthiness, your worldliness, and your known sins, than to keep them any longer? What say you? Are you not convinced that it were your wisest course to part with them this very day and hour? Undoubtedly many of you are. And yet for all this, will you not resolve to do it? Are you not persuaded in your own consciences, that it is better to die in a holy, and heavenly state, than in a loose, and careless worldly state? And that it were your safest and wisest course to become new men, and lead a holy, heavenly life without delay? Dare you deny this? Is it not your judgment? And yet will you not do it? Are you re-

solved that it should be done, and must be done, and yet will you not resolve to do it? Why, what is this but to be condemners of yourselves? To carry a judge about with you in your own breasts, that is still passing sentence against you? "Happy is he," saith the Spirit of God, (Rom. xiv. 22.) "that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth." If your judgments be resolved, let your wills resolve, or else you are wilful adversaries of the light, and fight against reason, and unman yourselves, and sinning wilfully against your knowledge, shall be beaten with many stripes.

7. Methinks also, it should somewhat quicken you to resolve, when you consider what a case you had now been in, if death had found you unresolved. For if you are unresolved, you are unsanctified; and if not sanctified, you are not pardoned, or justified; and, therefore, undoubtedly you had been past all help, in endless misery, if you had died all this while, before you were firmly resolved for God. O what a dangerous, ticklish condition have you stood in all this while? What wise man would live an hour in such a case for all the world, for fear lest that hour should be his last? And yet would you stay longer in it? and still are you unresolved?

8. Believe it, Christ will not own you as his servants, nor trust you, whatever promises you may make him, as long as you are unresolved.

Who will take a servant that is not resolved to do any service? Who will take an unresolved person if he knows it, as a wife, or a friend, into his intimate love? And indeed you are not truly Christians till you are resolved to take Christ for better and worse. Whatever state is short of this, is also short of true sanctification, and will fall short of heaven. Christ is resolved to stick to his servants, and he will have no servants that be not resolved to stick to him.

9. And indeed if you be unresolved, as you are false-hearted at the first setting out, so it is certain that you will never go well on, nor endure to the end in case of trial, nor can you do the business of a Christian's life, without resolution. If you will be Christ's disciples, you must reckon upon persecutions; you must take up your cross and follow him; you must be hated of all men for his sake and the

Gospel's ; and you must prepare for prison, and fire, and sword : there is no hope of being saved, while you purpose to save your pleasures, riches, liberties or lives ; Matt. xvi. 25. Mark viii. 35. Luke ix. 24. And will a man that is unresolved forsake his friends, estate, and life for the sake of Christ and the hopes of glory ? He cannot do it. I know that a carnal, ungrounded resolution may deceive a man in the day of trial, when the self-suspecting, fearful Christian may hold out ; but yet without a humble, self-denying resolution, joined with an adherence to Christ for strength, there is no man will hold out. " If thou be a wavering-minded man, thou wilt be unsteadfast in all thy ways ;" James i. 8. If thou be not resolved, the words of a man's mouth will turn thee out of the way ; the very mocks and scorns of a drunkard, or a fool that hath no understanding in the matters of salvation, will make thee shrink and hide thy profession, and be ashamed of Christ, in whom alone thou hast cause to glory. If thou be not a resolved man, what better can be expected, but that thou turn as the weathercock with every wind, and fit thy religion to thy worldly ends, and as another Judas, sell thy Lord for a little money. If thou fall not away, it will be but for want of a trial to procure it ; and therefore in God's account thou art gone already ; because thy resolution was never with it.

When you turn to God, there will remain within you the remnants of your corruption, a body of death, a rebelling flesh ; and this will be still tempting you, and drawing you from God. O how strong do these temptations seem to the soul that is unresolved ! Yea, without a firm habitual resolution, it is impossible to overcome them. Your whole way to heaven is a continual warfare ; you have enemies that will dispute every foot of the way with you. There is no going a step forward, but as the ship doth in the sea, by cutting its way through the waves and billows ; and as the plough doth in the earth, by cutting through the resisting soil. There is self, which is your principal enemy, and there is satan, and the world, and almost all that you meet with in it, will prove your hinderers ; and you must make your way by valour and holy violence through all : and will an unresolved man do this ? You will scarce ever bow your knee to God in secret prayer, nor set yourselves upon serious meditations, but the flesh and the devil will be drawing you off ;

you will never attempt a faithful reproof, a liberal work of charity, a hazardous confession of Christ, or any dangerous or costly duty, but the flesh and the devil will plead against it, and put you to it. And in these and in many such cases of your lives, you will never break through, nor do any good on it, without resolution. Do I need to tell you how hard the way of salvation is, that fly from it on mistake, because you think it harder than it is? Do I need to tell you how false you will prove to Christ, if you have not resolution; that you know it by your ordinary, miserable experience, that a poor temptation will make you sin against your knowledge? How many good wishes and purposes have you had already, in sickness, or at a lively sermon, that are all come to nothing, for want of a firm habituate resolution! What abundance of timeservers, and of chaffy professors are lately fallen off to the way of rising and riches in the world, or to the pride and giddy levity of dividers, that oppose the truth of God, and their teachers, and trouble the church, and all because they were never well rooted by a sound resolution! They that take Christ but upon liking, do usually dislike him when he calls them to self-denial; for they had never that connatural principle that should effectually dispose their souls to like him; nor had they ever the inward experiences of power and sweetness, which are proper to the sincere, and should increase their liking of him. Either resolve therefore, or stand by and perish.

10. I beseech you consider also, What abundance of clear undeniable reasons doth God give in to thee, to turn the scales, and cause thee to resolve. He fetcheth reasons from his own dominion and sovereignty. Should not a creature obey the Lord that made him? He reasoneth with you from his daily preservations. Do you live upon him, and should you not obey him? He reasoneth with you from his almightiness: you are all at his mercy, and wholly in his hands; and yet dare you disobey him? He reasoneth with you from his love and goodness; never did evil come from him; nor did he ever do any wrong; never was there man or angel that was a loser by him; it is not possible to have so good a master, and yet will you not obey him? He fetcheth reasons from all his mercies; every bit of bread is from him, and should be an argument with thee to obey him: every day's health, and strength, and comforts, and every

night's rest and ease; thy mercies at home, thy mercies abroad, in private, and in public; all should be so many arguments with thee to resolve. You cannot look upon a plant or a flower under your feet, upon the sun or a star that is over your heads, or upon any creature, but you may see so many reasons that should move you to resolve. If all these will not serve, he fetcheth yet stronger reasons from the incarnation, example, and blood of the Son of God: canst thou look on God incarnate for sin, combating with satan, and conquering for thee, and dying, and bleeding, and buried for thy sin: and yet be unresolved to leave that sin, and turn to him that hath bought thee by his blood? If all this will not serve, he reasoneth with thee from thy own benefit. If thou care not for God, dost thou care for thyself? Dost thou regard thy own soul? If thou dost, it is high time to resolve. He reasoneth with thee from everlasting glory. Is a certain kingdom, and everlasting glorious kingdom nothing to thee? Art thou content to be thrust out of that eternal inheritance? Is the filthy pleasure of the flesh for a few hours, better than the endless joys of the saints? He pleads also with thee from the danger that thou art near. Poor soul! thou little seest what others see, that are dead before thee. Thou little knowest what they feel, that died before they were resolved for God. He fetcheth his reasons from the certain and everlasting flames of hell; and is there not force enough in these for to resolve thee? Good Lord! what a thing is a senseless sinner! Dost thou believe heaven and hell as thou takest on thee to do? If thou dost believe them, is it possible for thee believingly to think of heaven and its eternal glory, and yet to be unresolved whether to turn or not? Or canst thou think of the endless miseries of the damned, and yet be unresolved whether to turn or not? Can any heart be so senseless or deluded?

Moreover, he pleadeth with thee from the equity and sweetness of his service. It is but to love him, and to seek his kingdom, and forbear those things that hurt thy soul. His commands are not unreasonable or grievous. Darest thou speak out and say, that sin is better, and that satan hath provided thee a better work than God hath done? He reasoneth with thee also from his wisdom and his justice. He tells thee, that as satan hath nothing to do with thee, and

as he is none of thy friends, and meaneth thee not so well as God doth, so he is not able to prescribe thee a more just and perfect law than God hath done. Follow God, and thou art sure thou shalt never be deceived or misled; for he wanteth not wisdom, or power, or goodness to be a meet lawgiver and guide: but if thou follow the devil, the world or the flesh, thou followest a blind and deceitful guide. And yet after all these reasons, art thou not resolved?

He reasoneth with thee also from thy own experience: What good hath sin done thee? and what hurt would holiness do thee? Yea, he reasons with thee from the experience of all the world. Who was ever the better for sinning? and who was ever the worse for holiness? How long will thy fleshly delights endure? What will this do for thee in thy extremity? Was ever man made happy by it? Thou knowest well enough thou must shortly leave it; and that it will forsake thee in thy greatest need; but so would not God, if thou hadst resolvedly given up thyself to him. All men that refuse a heavenly life, do sooner or later wish that they had chosen it.

Abundance of such reasonings God useth with thee in his word, and by his ministers; and dost thou think indeed that there is not weight enough in these to give thee cause immediately to resolve? How little or nothing canst thou say against them! Canst thou bring any reason, that is reason indeed, against these or any of these reasons of the Lord? Darest thou say, that ever a one of them is false or insufficient? And what are the reasons which you have on the contrary to hinder you from resolving? Forsooth, because your sins are sweet, you would fain have the pleasure of them a little longer yet. O wretched souls! that find more pleasure in the abusing of your Maker and Redeemer, than in loving, honouring, and pleasing him: that delight more in serving the flesh and the devil, than in serving God, and seeking after his favour and your own salvation! You are a hundred times madder than a man that lieth tumbling himself in his dung, and will not rise out of it to receive a kingdom, because it is so soft and so sweet that he is loath yet to leave it: you are more foolish than Nebuchadnezzar had been, if he had been loath to return again to his kingdom, because he would fain stay longer among the beasts of the field, among whom, in his distraction, he had betaken

himself; Dan. iv. 31—33. And what other reasons have you against resolving? Forsooth you shall be mocked or jested at by others; by whom I pray you? Not a man, but a miserable fool will do it. Yea, but you are told you must forsake all, and be ready to die for Christ, if he call you to it. Very true, and can you keep that which he calleth you to forsake? How long will you keep it? Silly souls! do you not know that you forsake it by not forsaking it, and lose all by saving any thing, and that you have no way to save it, but by losing and forsaking it? Suppose you were by enemies banished out of England, and upon pain of death you must be gone within a twelvemonth; and a king that loveth you, inviteth you to his country, and tells you for the poor livings that you have lost, he will make you lords and princes, so you will bring with you the little goods that you have, and leave nothing behind you; hereupon one man takes the next wind, and ships over all his riches, that he may have it when he comes there; another saith, 'I am loath to leave my goods, I have a while longer to stay here, and what shall I do without them? I am loath to see the habitation of my ancestors impoverished;' and so when his time is expired, he is fain to leave them all behind him, and hath none that will receive him in the country where he is to abide. Which of these think you is the wiser man? Which of them was it that lost his goods, and which did save them? I speak to you but such another parable as Christ used to you himself, Luke xvi. 2—4. 9. where you are advised to send your riches before you; and to make you friends of the "mammon of unrighteousness, that when you die, you may be received into the everlasting habitations."

I know that there are other vain delusions that hinder you from resolving; I will not call them reasons, for they are unreasonable. I shall only say this to you, that if there be ever a man of you that heareth his words, that dare be such a blasphemer as to reproach the laws and image of his Maker, and say, That he hath made you too strict a law, and laid too heavy a task upon you, and a heavenly life is troublesome and unnecessary: if there be a man of you, that is so devilish, as that you dare plead the devil's cause, and justify his work before the Lord's, and say, that it is better to please the flesh; let that man prepare himself to make good these words before the Lord, and his holy angels; and be

sure that he shall be there put to it in another manner than he is here by me. And if you have such reasons as you will stand to before the bar of God, to prove the devil the better master, and an unholy life to be better than a heavenly; see then that you look them up, and there make your best of them; and expect to live with the master that you served, and to reap as you sowed, and eat the fruit of your fleshly ways which you took to be the best. But if you have no such reasons, but your consciences are convinced that God should be served, and sin should be speedily forsaken, and heaven should be provided for above all; resolve then to do it before you stir: or else say plainly, I have no reason to be wicked, but because I will be wicked, I will forsake God, and damn my own soul without any reason, because I will do it. And if you are at this pass, you may take your course.

11. Another thing that I would entreat you to consider of, is this, It is a most base and treacherous abuse of God, to make any question of this which you are so long unresolved of. I confess, when a blind mind hath raised such a question, it is lawful for a reasonable man to answer it. But in him that makes a doubt of such a thing, as it is a shame to himself, so it is a heinous indignity to God. If you had a chaste and modest woman to your wife, I think she would take it for an injury, if you would but make a question of it, Whether she or a common whore be the honester woman? If your wife or children should bring before you a hobby-horse or an ass; and make a great question of it, Whether you or the ass be the comelier or the wiser? how would you take this of them? If you should bring an idiot or a mad-man before your prince, and make a question, Whether he or they be the wiser man? Or if you set a rebel before him, and make a question, Which of them hath the better title to the crown? what entertainment might you expect? I tell you it is ten thousand thousand times a baser affront and wrong to God, to set the pleasure of sin before him, and make a question, Which of them is the better? And to set your riches, and your sports, and your drunkenness, and gluttony, and your whoredom, and your revenge, in competition with your Redeemer, and everlasting glory, and to make a question, Which of them is to be preferred? To make once a question, Whether God or the flesh should be pleased? Whether Christ or the world should be loved and

followed? Whether the Holy Ghost or the devil should dwell in us, and guide us? Whether the saints of God, or the servants of the devil should be our chosen company? Whether the word and ministers of Christ, or the examples and words of wicked men, should more prevail with us? Whether heaven or earth should be more carefully sought after? Whether a holy, or a careless, wicked life be more to be desired? Or whether it be better to turn to God or not? I say, to make such a question as this, or one of these is little better than to put a scorn upon the God of heaven; and savoureth of such malice as is more like a devil, than a reasonable man; or else of such folly as is below the devil, and as none of you would be guilty of in the matters of this world. If one should but make a comparison between you and some deformed monster, or between your house and a swinestye, though he gave you the better, I think you would take it as a scorn, that he should make such a comparison or question; much more may God so take it, when you make a question betwixt sin and him. There is but one infinite, unconceivable, perfect God, and shall he be abased by such a question? There is but one thing that is contrary to God in all the world, that is worse than the devil himself, and that is sin; and shall this be put in question or comparison with God? There is but one that hath loved us to the death, but with a matchless, unconceivable, saving love, and that is Jesus Christ; and there is but one thing that is a deadly enemy to us and him, and that would damn us, when he is endeavouring to save us, and that is sin; and must there be a question or comparison between these? There is one sanctifying Spirit, that would cleanse, and heal, and save us; and there is a malicious spirit that would deceive us, defile us, and destroy us; and must there be any question or comparison made between these? There is but one eternal happiness, and one holy way to it; and there is but one everlasting misery, and fleshly, filthy, sinful way to it; and must there be made any question which of these should be preferred? Consider I beseech you, what you do: and if it be so vile a thing to make any question of it, what is it then to be still unresolved? Yea, and to choose the worse part, and stick to it in your heart and life?

12. Consider also, that present resolution would put an end to a great many fruitless, troublesome deliberations and

delays. If a man had but a weighty business of the world upon his hand, that his estate or life lieth on, it is a perplexity to him as long as he is unresolved what course he should take. It will be troubling him when he should rest, and break his sleep. It will fill him with musings, and disturb and distract his mind, and even make him melancholy. And how can it choose but be a troublesome, distracting thing to your mind, to be unresolved what course to take for your everlasting state? I know some hearts are so desperately hardened and past feeling (Ephes. iv. 19.), and some men's consciences so seared as with a hot iron (1 Tim. iv. 2.), that they can throw away all thoughts of resolution, and never be much troubled. But I hope that many are not so desperate. It is not thus with all that are unconverted. How long have some of your minds been troubled whether to turn or not? Resolve man, if thou love thy soul, and put an end to such troubles.

13. Consider also, that resolving will put an end to a great many of troublesome temptations that do assault you, and will break the heart of satan's hopes. As long as you are unresolved, he hath still possession of you, and is still in hopes to keep possession. And as long as he hath any hope, he will never give over, but will be repairing his garrison, and making up all the breaches that the ordinances of God had made. When one temptation takes not, he will be offering you another, and will be following and disquieting you day and night. But if once he see you firmly resolved, his hopes will fail him, and you may be much freer from his temptations than you were before. I do not say he will give over. For even when you are broken away from him, he will make after you again. But it is a greater advantage to you to fight against him in the open field, under such a captain as Jesus Christ, that will assure you of the victory, than to be in his own prison with his fetters on your heels. You know the way to be troubled with an unwelcome suitor, is to delay your answer, and take time to consider of it; and the way to be eased of him, is to give him a peremptory resolute answer. And when he seeth you resolved, he will cease.

14. Moreover, till you are resolved of your conversion, you cannot rationally resolve of any one word or action of your lives. Nay, till then they are all misemployed to their

hurt. For no man can resolve of the means till he is resolved of the end. You must resolve whither to go, before you can resolve which way to go. Before conversion men's end is wrong. Their intention and business is to please the flesh, and all their thoughts, and words, and actions, that have such an end, are wicked and pernicious. Till you are resolved by conversion to be for God, you have never a right end (in a prevailing sense), and, therefore, you cannot order one thought, nor word, nor deed aright. I tell you, every thought you think, and every word you speak, and every deed you do while you are unconverted, are so many steps towards hell, except only those that tend towards conversion, and some way further it. Resolve, therefore, of this, or you can resolve of nothing.

15. Moreover, if you would presently and firmly resolve, you would ease your friends and the ministers of Christ of much of their sorrows, and fears, and cares for you; and of much of the most troublesome part of their work. As long as you are unconverted, they can look on you but as the heirs of hell, that will be quickly in those torments, if conversion prevent it not; and, therefore, their hearts are full of sorrow for you, when you sorrow not for yourselves; and their care is, how they might prevent your damnation, which they know, without conversion, can never be done. Many a groan doth your misery cost them, and many a thought have they of your danger, which you are not aware of. O what a grief is it to believing ministers, to see so many of their people in the power of satan, and the highway to hell, after all their care and labour for their recovery. We cannot say that the unconverted shall certainly perish, because we have yet hopes that they may be converted, though they be not. But we know that if they die in the case that they are in, there is no hope of them at all, and we know they are uncertain to live an hour. And, therefore, as long as they are in this condition, how can we choose but be filled with fear, and grief, and care for them? All the troubles that befall a faithful minister in his worldly affairs, by crosses and persecutions, are nothing to the trouble that your sin and misery bringeth to their minds. O what a comfortable life were it for a minister to live with bread and water among a people that would obey the Gospel, and give us hopes that we should live with them in heaven! O how cheerfully may

we study for them, and preach to them, when we see that it is not lost upon them! How willingly should we prepare them the bread of life, when we see they feed and live upon it! How joyfully may we pray and praise God with them, when we think how much they must join with us in the celestial praises. O, sirs, I beseech you, grudge not your ministers this comfort. Do not destroy yourselves to grieve and trouble them. O put them once out of their fears and grief for you, by your resolving and speedy return to God. That they that have many a time thought in their hearts, ‘I am afraid this poor sinner will never be recovered; I am afraid he will be a firebrand in hell,’ may now rejoice with you when they see you coming home, and may meet you as the Father himself doth meet his prodigal children, and weep over you for joy, as they were wont to do in sorrow. You would ease our hearts of abundance of sad thoughts, if we could but perceive you once resolved, and see you come home. Now you think our preaching harsh to you, because we tell you so much of sin and damnation; and you think our discipline more harsh, when we refuse to have communion with you. But if you would once resolve and turn, how gladly should we open our doors and our hearts to you; and how gladly should we turn the stream of our preaching, and tell you of nothing but Christ, and heaven, and peace, and comfort, further than your own necessities should require it. What say you, sirs, to this reasonable request? Will you resolve without any more ado, and ease us of our grief and fears, and give us but leave to preach more comfortable doctrine to you?

16. Moreover consider, that you have much work to do when you are resolved and converted, and a great way to go when you have begun your journey towards heaven. And till you are resolved, none can be done. You can go no farther, till conversion have set you in the right way. Till then, the farther you go, the farther you are out of the way. Will you be unresolved till the night come on? Shall all the rest of your work be undone? Will you begin your race when you should be at the end? Alas! you should be able to say as Paul: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;” 2 Tim. iv. 8. when as you cannot yet say, ‘I have begun my course; I am set in the right way.’

17. Consider also, that resolution maketh work easy and successful. The resolute army is seldom conquered. A resolute traveller will go through with his journey, and it is easier to himself: his spirits are excited; and doing it with vivacity, he findeth less trouble in it. A slow and lazy pace doth sometimes soonest weary us. A slow motion is most easily stopt, when a swift one bears down that which would resist it. A man that resolvedly sets himself to the work of God, and is past any further deliberating of the matter, and is at a point with all the world, will make a pleasure of that which will stop and stall an unresolved professor. Resolve therefore, for your own success and ease.

I tell you, by resolving it is that you must conquer, and by conquering, you must obtain the crown. The unresolved are wavering at every assault, like cowardly soldiers, even ready to run before they fight. They will not be at the cost or labour; they are soon weary; they cannot say nay to an old companion, or a tempting bait. But the resolved breaks through all, and treads that under his feet as dirt, which another sells his soul for. If he meet with reproaches and scorns from men, he remembereth that Christ foretold him this, and suffered much more of the like before him. If his friends turn enemies for the Gospel's sake, he saith, 'I was told of this before, even that I must be hated of all men for Christ.' If he be enticed by lewd and wanton company, he saith as David, "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God;" Psal. cxix. 115. If he be tempted with rewards and honours in the world, he will not stand wavering and longing after it, as Balaam; but he will say the same Balaam was forced to do: "If you will give me a house full of gold and silver, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord." And 'let their money perish with them, that think all the gold in the world worth the peace of a good conscience, and the favour of God.' If he be threatened by men to move him to forsake his duty, he saith, "Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye." If he hear seducers, he is rooted in the Spirit, and the infallible word, and is not shaken by every wind. If he see never so many fall off by backsliding, he saith, 'It was not only for their company that I chose the holy way: God is still the same, and heaven and earth is the same; and Scripture is the same; and, therefore, I am resolved to be the

same.' If God afflict him by poverty, sickness, or other trials, he saith, 'I did not become a Christian to escape affliction, but to "escape damnation. _ If he kill me, yet will I trust in him. Shall I receive good at the hands of God, and not evil? Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return to dust. The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away; blessed be his name." If oppressing enemies insult over him, he can say, as Mich. vii. 8, 9. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If the wicked cast in his teeth his profession, and the name of his God, "He rejoiceth that he is counted worthy to suffer for that name;" and yet "he will hope to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." And if he must go to heaven through poverty and a mean estate, "he hath learned to want, as well as to abound; and in what estate soever he be, therewith to be contented." And so in the work of conversion itself, for want of resolution, many stick long in the birth, and they are hanging so long between heaven and hell, that it is a wonder of mercy that God doth not cut them off, and let them perish. But the well-resolved soul doth deal more faithfully with the light that is revealed to him, and doth not stand struggling so long against it, nor hold Christ and his Spirit so long in hand; but is glad to make sure work in so great a business, and take so good a match while it is offered. And being engaged once, he is firm as Mount Sion, that cannot be moved. Resolve, therefore, that your work may be the more easy and successful, and conquer by resolving.

18. I suppose you dare not resolve against conversion, and a heavenly life; and why then will you not resolve for it? What purpose you to do for the time to come? Is it your resolution to live and die as you are? Have you not purposes in your mind to repent hereafter? Dare you say, 'I am resolved never to be converted?' Some may be so desperate; but I think it is but few, even of the ungodly. Why, this shews that there is a secret conviction in your consciences. O do not stifle it. Neutrality never saved a

soul. Seeing you dare not resolve against it, resolve for it.

19. Consider, I beseech you, how much it doth concern yourselves, to have this question well and speedily resolved. God asked you, Whether you will be converted and sanctified or not? Resolve this question, and you resolve yourselves of a great many more that depend upon it.

The answer to this must be the answer to the rest. If the question were, Whether you will be pardoned or no? Whether you will live in heaven or hell for ever? Whether you will dwell with God and angels, or with devils? You would not be long in answering this. You would resolve without an hour's delay. Why, this is the question, sirs! but the answer to it must be the answer to the first question. For without sanctification, there is no salvation. If you will not be converted, you shall be condemned, whether you will or no; for God hath resolved of this already, and there is no resisting the resolution of God. The true state of the question is, Whether you will turn or burn? Choose you whether, for it must be one. O, therefore, if you will but resolve Christ and us this one question, that you will be converted, Christ will resolve you the principal questions that concern you in the world: even whether you shall be pardoned or saved; and where, and with whom you must live for ever.

20. Lastly, consider, that if you stay till you receive the sentence of death, it is two to one but that will force you to resolve. But a forced resolution will not serve turn. And then it will be very hard for you to discern whether it be any better than merely from your fears. You put off all till sickness come, and you see once that you must die, there is no remedy; and then you will cry, 'O if the Lord would but recover me, and try me once again with life, I would delay no longer, but I would become a new man, and live a holy, heavenly life; I am resolved of it by the grace of God.' Yea, but who knows whether these last resolutions be sincere. We hear abundance speak this in their sickness, that never turn when they come to health, but forget all, and live in a manner as they did before. Is it not most likely to be only the fear of death that makes you take up these resolutions? If it be so, they will never save you if you die, nor hold you to your promise if you live. For it is not bare

fear that is true conversion ; but it is a changed heart, that is fallen in love with God and holiness, and into a settled hatred of former sins. No late repentance and resolutions but these, will be any thing worth as to the saving of your souls. And, therefore, if you will have true resolutions at the last (which is too rare) you cannot choose but be much in doubt of them, when you find so much of fear upon your spirit, and consider that you would never resolve till then. And, therefore, if you would have a comfortable change, resolve now in your prosperity, before the face of death affright you to it, and those fears, and the lateness do make you question the truth and soundness of it, and so deprive you of the comfort which you have so much need of at a dying hour.

And thus I have given you twenty Considerations to persuade you, if it may be, presently to resolve. I am sure there is truth, and reason, and weight in them ; but what good they will do you, I am not sure, because I know not how you will receive them.

iv. And now I come to the last part of my task, which is to direct you how to perform the work that I have persuaded you to. But because it is merely the determination of the will, it is persuasion that must do more to the work than direction ; and therefore I shall only desire you to look back upon the qualifications of sound resolution, which I before laid down to you, and then take heed of the hindrances in your way, and to set yourselves to do your duty.

Remember that I before told you, That it is not a holy, saving resolution, unless it be,

1. Entire for the matter of it, comprehending all that is essential to Christianity.

2. And unless you resolve upon present obedience without delay.

3. And also unless it be absolute and peremptory, taking Christ for better and worse, without any reserve.

4. And unless it be well-grounded.

5. And unless it be built on the strength of Christ, and not only a carnal confidence of your own.

6. And unless it be habitual and firm, and become your ordinary frame and bias, and, as it were, the new nature and inclination of your souls.

By this much you see already what manner of resolution it is that you must have.

The next thing is, to advise you of the hindrances that you may avoid them.

1. The principal hindrance of resolution is secret unbelief; when everlasting life is taken but as an uncertainty, or men have no more but a slight opinion of it. The cure of this disease, I have often, and a little before delivered to you.

2. Another thing that hindereth resolution is inconsiderateness, of which also I have spoken purposely before.

3. Another hindrance is a sleepy insensibility, when the heart is hardened, and men are past feeling. We cannot tell how to awaken these men to be sensible of the things that should move them to resolve. Of this also I have spoken by itself.

4. Another great hindrance is the natural strangeness and averseness of the mind of corrupted men, to these high and spiritual things. So that we drive men by all our arguments against the bias of their sinful habits: and those habits plead against us more forcibly without a word of reason, than all the reason in the world could do. See, therefore, that you keep under changing means till your hearts be changed; and the perusing of such weighty arguments as we offer you, may be of use to the changing of your hearts: for God useth to work on the will by the understanding; and therefore light hath an aptitude to change the will itself.

5. Moreover, the rooted interest of this world doth much hinder men from resolving to turn. It is always drawing them another way, or putting objections and cavils into their minds; and if they will needs resolve, it is this that secretly enticeth them to reserves, and to resign themselves to God but with conditions and exceptions; and so makes them hypocrites, when they think themselves converts; and cheats them with a half-deceitful resolution, instead of one that is absolute and firm. Against this impediment also I have spoken before.

6. Another hindrance is, the nearness of fleshly, enticing objects. When the covetous man seeth his houses and lands, his goods and money, the very sight of them breaks the heart of all his better resolutions. The drunkard seems to be resolved, till he sees the cup, and then his resolution is broken. The whoremonger seemeth to be re-

solved, till the bait is brought near him, and then he goes as "an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks." Certainly if these resolutions were sound, they would either cause men to fly from the bait, and not come near it, or else to refuse it when it is presented them. In the course of their lives, their resolution would govern them if they were sincere.

7. And satan himself will do all that he can to hinder you when he sees you ready to resolve. He knows that he must bestir him now or never. You never put him to it indeed till you are resolving to forsake him. One block or other he will be sure then to cast in your way : either he tells you, it is but folly and melancholy to trouble yourself with these matters ; or that you may be saved without all this ado ; or that God is more merciful than to cast away all that be not sanctified ; or that godliness doth but trouble and distract people, and that the professors of it are secretly no better than others, and that it is but hypocrisy for them to make such a stir with religion, and that we must be moderate in our godliness, and take heed of being godly overmuch. A hundred such foolish suggestions as these, the devil hath at hand to cast in your way, when he seeth you ready to resolve.

If these will not serve, he will set some of his wicked disciples on railing or deriding you ; and perhaps some cunning fool a cavilling with you, to see if they can overwit you, and draw you back.

If that will not do, perhaps he will open the falls of professors to you, and labour to persuade you that all are such : or he will shew you what divisions and differences are among them ; or he will take advantage of some difficulties in religion, or some controversies in which he sees you already engaged to a party ; or he will tell you of some false doctrine that some forward professors may be tainted with, to make them ; and consequently godliness itself, more odious, or at least suspected to you. If all this will not do, he will endeavour to set your very parents or natural kindred against you, that those that should most promote your salvation, and on whom your livelihood much dependeth, shall become your enemies, and hate you for offering to give up yourselves to Christ. If that will not do, he will endeavour to

entice you with the baits of fleshly pleasure, or of preferments, or much business, or merry company, or some great matters that you may hope for in the world. And usually this snare is the strongest of all. Or else he will tell you that if needs you will resolve, it is time enough hereafter : you may yet take more of your pleasure or commodity before you leave it ; yet you may suck the breasts of the world a little drier, and then turn to God and cast it off. If all this will not prevail with you, he will tell you it is now too late, you have sinned so long, or such heinous sins, that God will not have mercy on you ; he will make you believe that God hath utterly forsaken you, and there is no remedy ; and you may as well spare your thoughts of turning now, for Christ will not receive or welcome you ; and therefore it is even as good to go on, and take up the rest that the world can afford you, for there is no hope of better. But the most desperate temptation of all the rest, is, to put some blasphemous, unbelieving thoughts into your mind ; especially if you fall into company with infidels, that will draw you to question the word of God, and the immortality of the soul, and the truth of Christianity, or the life to come, whether there be any such things or not. Where these once take, and are received with approbation, the soul is in a miserable case. Though I know many tempted, melancholy Christians are haunted with such temptations, who yet abhor them, and do well at last, for all this. Sometimes also, when he cannot take you off from resolving, he will lead you among some disputing opinionists, and they shall entice you to take up with their opinionative religiousness instead of true sanctification, of which I have spoken in the eighth Direction. By these and many such wiles as these, doth the old serpent do all that possibly he can, to hinder you from sound resolution and conversion. And therefore you must be armed against his temptations, and meet them with abhorrence ; and if you feel them too hard for you, go daily to Christ by faith and prayer for renewed strength, and call to your faithful friends and ministers for help. Open your case to some one that is able, experienced, and faithful ; that he may help you with arguments to resist those temptations which you know not how yourselves to deal with. God hath appointed pastors in his church to be spiritual fathers in the Lord, and when they have sowed in you the seed of

eternal life, they watch over it till they see the blade and fruit: they travail as in birth of you, till Christ be formed in you. It is their office to help you, and God giveth to them that are faithful, abilities and affections agreeable to their office. And therefore lean upon the hand of your faithful guides, and think not to break through temptations alone, and get to heaven without the means that God hath appointed you.

Having told you the hindrances, and what to do against them, I shall add but these two words more of direction.

1. When you are resolving, give up yourselves to God with a holy covenant or vow. I mean not any rash vow, nor any unnecessary vow, but the same that you made in baptism, which your age itself doth call you to renew, but your sins against it do call you more.

Perhaps you will say that you are not able to perform it by your own strength, and you are uncertain of God's assistance, and therefore how can you promise or vow?

To this I answer, 1. You may be sure that this objection is frivolous, because it makes against the frequent and express commands of God, the practice of his church in all ages, and the nature of Christianity itself. God hath in all ages been pleased to receive men into his service and church in a covenant way, and baptism itself is our solemn covenanting with him, and the Lord's supper is appointed for a solemn renewing of it. And indeed it is implicitly and virtually renewed by a true Christian every day of his life. In every duty he gives up himself to God: and if he should cease this heart-covenant, he would cease to be a Christian, for the very essence of his Christianity consisteth in it. It is his faith itself.

2. And when you covenant for the time to come, you do not take on you to foretel infallibly your own perseverance, but you profess your present consent to be Christ's, and to continue his, and you engage yourselves thereto. And should you not choose the strictest engagements?

(1.) Where there is the greatest need of them, because of the looseness of the heart, and the strength of temptations, that would draw us away.

(2.) Where there is the most absolute necessity, because if we miscarry we are undone.

(3.) And where you are already obliged by God's commands, whether you vow or not.

(4.) And where God hath made your consent to the obligation of necessity to salvation. He that intends to keep covenant, and knows that he must keep it, or be condemned, hath little reason to be loath to make it.

(5.) And for God's assistance, you have much more cause to expect it in the way of covenanting, which himself hath appointed you, than in the neglect of his appointed means.

Object. 'But I am afraid of breaking my vows again, and it is better to forbear them, than not to perform them.'

Ans. 1. This reason makes as much against the inward vow and resolution of the heart, so that by this rule you would never be Christians, for fear of falling away, and being worse.

2. There is an absolute necessity of your resolving and covenanting, and of keeping your resolution, and covenants. And when it must be kept, or you are utterly undone, it is but a madness to refuse to make the covenant for fear of breaking it; for this is but to make choice of an easier place in hell, for fear of having a worse, if you should resolve for heaven, when as heaven is set open before you, and you thus wilfully cast away your hopes. Nay, your place in hell is not like to be the easier, when you thus deliberately and wilfully refuse the covenant.

3. Your resolutions and holy vows are means of God's appointment to keep you from breaking his imposed covenant. Is not a resolved, engaged, devoted Christian more likely to be accepted, and to persevere, than a waverer that saith, 'I dare not vow, for fear lest I perform not?'

In unnecessary matters, I had rather you were too backward to vow. Some will vow poverty, and some a single life, and some will vow that they will never drink wine or strong drink more; such vows as these may be good for some in cases of special necessity, as the last remedies of a dangerous disease; but they are not for all, nor rashly to be made. But the resolution and vow of cleaving unto God in faith and holy obedience, and of renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; this is for all, and must be made and kept by all, that will be saved.

2. *Direct.* And as I would have you second your resolution by a covenant with God, so I would advise you ordi-

narily to go further, and openly profess the resolution and covenant that you have made. "For as with the heart men believe unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation ;" Rom. x. 10. Christ will confess those that confess him, and disown, and be ashamed of those that are ashamed of him. When you have escaped the greatest misery in the world, and obtained the greatest mercy in the world, the greatness of it calleth you to acknowledge and give glory to God. Go to your old companions in sin, and tell them what God hath revealed to you, and done for you. Tell them, ' O sirs, I see now that which I never saw before ! I wonder how I could venture so madly upon sin ! and how I could make light of God, of Christ, of death, of judgment, and everlasting life. I have been hitherto your companion in sin, but I would not take the same course again for all the world. I see now there is a better portion hereafter to be obtained, which I was mindless of. I see now we were all this while making merry at the brink of hell, and there was but a step between us and death. Now I see that the course that we have taken is wicked and deceitful, and will not serve turn. If I serve the flesh, it will reward me but with rottenness. I will, therefore, hereafter, serve that God, that will certainly reward me with everlasting life. I beseech you, sirs, come away with me, and see and try what I have seen and tried. I have lived with you in sin, O now let us join together in repentance, and a holy life ! I shall be glad of your company to heaven ; but if you will not do it, take your course. For my part I am resolved, by the grace of God, I am fully resolved, to be from this day forward a new man, and never to join with you more in a fleshly and ungodly life. Never tempt me or persuade me to it, for I am resolved.'

Thus if you will declare your resolutions to others, and seek to win them, you may possibly do them good ; but however, you will be the deeper engaged to God yourselves.

Yea, though I would have no ostentation of conversion, nothing done rashly in public, nor without the advice of a faithful minister beforehand ; yet with these cautions, I must say, that it is a shame that we hear no more in public of the conversion of sinners. As baptism is to be in public, that the congregation may witness your engagement, and pray for you, and rejoice at the receiving of a member ; so the

solemn renewing of the same covenant by repentance after a wicked life, should ordinarily be in public, to give warning to others to avoid the sin, and to give God the honour, and to have the prayers of the church, and to satisfy them of our repentance, that they may have communion with us. The Papists do more offend (of the two) in so much confining confession and penitence to the priest's ear in secret, and not bringing it before the church, than they do in making a sacrament of it. I wonder that people should every day thrust into our hands their request to pray for them when they are sick, and that it is so rare a matter to have any to desire our prayers, for the pardon of all the sins of their natural, unconverted state.

I would here seriously advise all those that it concerneth, that when God hath shewed them so great a mercy as to convert them and make them new creatures, they would go to their faithful minister, and by his advice put up such a bill as this : ' Such a man, of this parish, having long lived in blindness, and deadness, and ungodliness, (and name the particular sins if they were publicly known) and being by the great mercy of God convinced of his sin and misery ; and sustained with some hopes of mercy by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ, and being now resolved by the grace of God, to forsake this fleshly, worldly life, and to give up himself to Christ and holiness, doth earnestly entreat the church to pray for him, that his many and heinous sins may be all forgiven, and that God would again receive him into mercy, and that he may hold on in faith and holiness to the last, and never turn again to the course of his iniquity.'

And if the minister think it meet, refuse not to make yourselves an open confession of your former life of sin and misery, and to profess openly your resolution to walk with God for the time to come.

This course should be more ordinary with us ; and if conversion itself were not so rare, or else so defective, that it doth too little quicken men to a sense of duty, and sin, and mercy ; or so doubtful, and by slow degrees, and that it is scarce discerned by many that have it, were it not for some of these, more ordinary would it be, to the great rejoicing and benefit of the church.

The Conclusion. And now I have given you Directions in the most great and necessary businesses of the world :

they are such as I have received of God, and if faithfully practised, will put your salvation past all hazard. But what they have done, or what they will do, I cannot tell, but must leave the issue to God and you. It is pity eternal glory should be lost, for want of yielding to so holy, and sweet, and reasonable a course. It is lamentable to observe, what ignorant, base, unworthy thoughts the most have of the very office of the Holy Ghost, who is the Sanctifier of all that God will save. The very name of regeneration and sanctification, is not understood by some, and is but matter of derision to others; and the most think that it is another kind of matter than indeed it is. To be baptized and come to church, and to say some cold and heartless prayers, and to forbear some gross, disgraceful sins, is all the sanctification that most are acquainted with; (and all have not this;) and thus they debase the work of the Holy Ghost. If a prince have built a sumptuous palace, and you will shew men a swinestye, and say, 'This is the palace that the prince hath been so long a building;' were not this to abuse him by contempt? If he built a navy, and you shew a man two or three pig-troughs, and say, 'These are the king's ships;' would he not take it for a scorn? Take heed of such dealing with the Holy Ghost. Remember what it is to believe in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and remember that you were baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and do you not yet know why, nor know the meaning of your baptismal covenant? It is not only to believe that there are three persons in the Trinity, but to consent to the relations and duty to them, in respect to their several relations and works. If the Father had not created you, how could you have been men? The Lord of nature must be acknowledged as the End and Governor of nature, and accordingly obeyed: and this is to believe and be baptized into the name of the Father. If the Son had not redeemed you, you had been as the devils were, forsaken and given over to despair. The Purchaser, Procurer, and Author of grace, of pardon, and salvation, must be acknowledged to be such, and himself and his salvation accordingly accepted, and his terms submitted to: and this is to believe in the name of the Son; and in baptism we make profession hereof. And certainly the work of the Holy Ghost is as necessary to your salvation. Without the sanctifying work

of the Spirit, could you never be delivered from sin and sathan, nor restored to God's image ; and consequently could never be the members of Christ, nor have any saving benefit by his sufferings. Would you not think him unworthy to live, that would reproach the Father's work of nature, and say, That the whole creation is but some poor contemptible work ! And would you not think him unworthy the name of a Christian, that had contemptible thoughts of the Son's redemption, as if we could be saved as well without a Saviour : or as if it were some poor and trivial commodity that Christ had purchased for us ? I know you would confess the misery of that man, that believeth no better in the Father and the Son : and how comes it to pass that you think not of your own misery, that believe no better in the Holy Ghost ? Do not you debase the sanctifying office of the Holy Spirit, when you shew us your knowledge and parts, and outward duties and civility, and tell us that these are the works of sanctification ? What ! is sanctification but such a thing as this ? Why, holiness is a new life and spirit in us ; and these that you talk of, are but a few flowers that are stuck upon a corpse to keep it awhile from stinking among men, till death convey it to a burial in hell. O sirs, sanctification is another kind of matter than the forsaking of some of our fouler vices, and speaking well of a godly life ; it is not the patching up of the old man, but the creating of a new man. I give you warning therefore from God, that you think not basely of the Holy Ghost ; and that you think no more to be saved without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, than without the redeeming work of the Son, or creation, government, or love of the Father. Sanctification must turn the very bent and stream of heart and life to God, to Christ, to heaven ; it must mortify carnal self, and the world to you ; it must make you a people devoted, consecrated, and resigned up to God, with all that you have : it must make all sin odious to you, and make God the love and desire of your souls ; so that it must give you a new heart, a new end, a new master, a new law, and a new conversation. This is that noble, heavenly work which the Holy Ghost hath vouchsafed to make the business of his office ; to slight and despise this, is to slight and despise the Holy Ghost : to refuse this, is to refuse the Holy Ghost, and not to believe in him : to be without this work, is to be without the

Holy Ghost : and “ if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his ;” Rom. viii. 9. The holy Catholic church is composed of all through the world that have this work upon them, and therefore it is called holy. The communion of saints, is the blessed vital fellowship of these sanctified ones ; for these only is the resurrection unto blessedness, and the life everlasting with the Lord of life : for all others is the resurrection of condemnation, and the everlasting punishment.

But if the other two articles of our faith have been so denied by the blind, it is less wonder if this be so. Some heretics denied God to be the Creator of the world, and because they saw so much evil in the world, they said that it was made by devils or evil angels (who indeed made the sin, but not the world). So dealt the Jews by the Son, and the second article of our faith. The sacrifice of bulls and goats, and such beasts, was all the sacrifice for sin that they believed in. And thus deal the multitude of the ungodly by the Spirit. Indeed they know not themselves sufficiently, to know the need and worth of sanctification. They are too whole to need the skill and care of Christ or the Holy Ghost. The insensibility of spiritual death and misery, and thinking too lightly of original corruption, and too well of our depraved nature, is both the cause of many of the heresies of the learned, and of the common contempt of Christ and the Spirit, and recovering grace, in all the unregenerate. For it is not possible that men should have any deeper sense of the need or worth of the remedy, than they have of the greatness of their sin and misery.

O sirs, did we not come upon this great disadvantage to you, that we speak to dead men, that have indeed a natural life, which doth but take pleasure in their spiritual death ; how confidently should we expect to prevail with all ! But while you think lightly of your disease, we can expect no better, but that you think as lightly of Christ and holiness, and all the means that tend to your recovery ; and think of the new man, as the poets fabled of the Promethean race, that it grows out of the earth (of your poor, sorry purposes and performances) like ordinary plants.

Truly sirs, I have led you even as far as I can ; and what more to say to you, or what more to do for you to procure your conversion, I do not know. If it had been in my power

to have shewed you heaven and hell itself, that you might better have known the matters that we speak of, I think I should have done it. But God will not have men live by sense in this life, but by faith. If I could but help you all to such a knowledge and apprehension of these invisible things, as the worst of you shall have as soon as you are dead, then I should make but little doubt of your conversion and salvation. Sure if you had but such a sight, the force of it would so work upon you, that before I went out of the congregation, you would all cry out that you are resolved to be new creatures. But though this be beyond my power, and though I cannot shew you the great and wonderful things that every eye here must shortly see; yet I come not to you without a glass of God's own making, and in that glass you may see them. There, if you have but an eye of faith, you may see that God that you have so long offended, and that now so earnestly inviteth you to return: there you may see that crucified Christ that hath opened you a way for repentance by his blood, and pleadeth that blood with you for the melting of your impenitent, obstinate hearts. There you may see the odious face of sin, and the amiable face of holiness, which is the image of God. There you may see both heaven and hell, for all that they are invisible; and may know what will be, and that to all eternity, as well as what is.

And will not such a sight in the glass of God's word serve turn to move thee presently to give up the trade of sinning, and to resolve before thou stir, for God? I am now come to the end of this part of my work; if the reading of it have brought thee to the end of thy ungodly, careless life, it will be happy for thee, and I shall so far attain the end of my labour. I have purposely put this Direction of the necessity of resolution in the last place, that I might leave upon thy spirit the reasons for resolution, that here I have laid down. And now I beseech thee reader, whoever thou art, with all the earnestness that I am able to use with thee, as ever thou wouldst escape the fruits of all thy sin, as ever thou wouldst see the face of God with comfort, and have him thy reconciled Father in Christ; as ever thou wouldst have a saving part in Christ, and have him stand thy friend in thy extremities; as ever thou wouldst have hope in thy death, and stand on the right hand, and be jus-

tified at judgment ; as ever thou wouldst escape the day of vengeance prepared for the unconverted, and the endless misery that will fall upon all unsanctified souls, as sure as the heaven is over thy head ; see that thou resolve and turn to God, and trifle with him no more. Away with thy old transgressions, away with thy careless, worldly life, away with thy ungodly company, and set thyself presently to seek after thy salvation with all thy heart, and mind, and might. I tell thee once more, that heaven and hell are not matters to be jested with, nor to be carelessly thought of, or spoken of, or regarded. The God of heaven stands over thee now while thou art reading all these words, and he seeth thy heart, whether thou art resolved to turn or not. Shall he see thee read such urgent reason, and yet wilt not resolve ? Shall he see thee read these earnest requests, and yet not resolve ? What ! not to come home to thy God, to thy Father, to thy Saviour, to thyself, after so long and wilful sinning ? What ! not to accept of mercy, now it is even thrust into thy hands, when thou hast neglected and abused mercy so long ? O let not the just and jealous God stand over thee, and see thee guilty of such wickedness. If thou be a Christian shew thyself a Christian, and use thy belief, and come to God. If thou be a man, shew thyself a man, use thy reason, and come away to God. I beseech thee read over and over again the reasons that I have here offered thee, and judge whether a reasonable man should resist them, and delay an hour to come in to God. I that am now writing these lines of exhortation to thee, must shortly meet thee at the bar of Christ. I do now adjure thee, and charge thee in the name of the living God, that thou do not thyself and me that wrong, as to make me lose this labour with thee, and that thou put me not to come in as a witness against thee, to thy confusion and condemnation. Resolve therefore presently in the strength of Christ, and strike an unchangeable covenant with him ; get thee to thy knees, and bewail with tears thy former life, and deliver up thyself wholly now to Christ, and never break this covenant more.

If thou lay by the book, and go away the same, and no persuasion will do any good upon thee, but unholy thou wilt still be, and sensual, and worldly still thou wilt be ; I call thy conscience to witness, that thou wast warned of the evil that is near thee ; and conscience shall obey this call,

and bear me witness whether thou wilt or not : and this book which thou hast read, which I intended for thy conversion and salvation, shall be a witness against thee : though age or fire consume the leaves and lines of it, yet God and conscience shall bring it to thy memory, and thou shalt then be the more confounded to think what reasons and earnest persuasions thou didst reject in so plain, so great and necessary a case.

But if the Holy Ghost will now become thy tutor, and at once both put this book into thy hand, and his heavenly light into thy understanding, and his life into thy heart, and effectually persuade thee to resolve and turn, how happy wilt thou be to all eternity ? Make no more words on it ; but answer my request, as thou wouldst do if thou wert in a burning fire, and I entreated thee to come out. Thou hast long enough grieved Christ and his Spirit, and long enough grieved thy friends and teachers : resolve this hour, and rejoice them that thou hast grieved ; and now grieve the devil, that thou hast hitherto rejoiced ; and hereafter grieve the wicked, and thy own deceitful flesh, whose sinful desires thou hast hitherto followed : and if thou also grieve thyself a little while, by that moderate sorrow that sin hath made necessary for thee, it will be but a preparative to thy endless joys, and the day is promised, and coming apace, when satan that thou turnest from, shall trouble thee no more, and God that thou turnest to, shall wipe away all tears from thy eyes. And if the reading of this book may be but a means of so blessed an end, as God shall have the glory, so when “ Christ cometh to be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that do believe,” (2 Thess. i. 10.) both thou and I shall then partake of the communication of his glory ; if so be that I be sincere in writing, and thou and I sincere in obeying the doctrine of this book. Amen.

July 5, 1657.

END OF DIRECTIONS AND PERSUASIONS TO CONVERSION.

DIRECTIONS

FOR

WEAK, DISTEMPERED CHRISTIANS,

TO

GROW UP TO A CONFIRMED STATE OF GRACE.

WITH

MOTIVES

**OPENING THE LAMENTABLE EFFECTS OF THEIR WEAKNESSES AND
DISTEMPERS.**

**PUBLISHED ALSO TO FURTHER THAT REPENTANCE, WHICH WARS,
AND PLAGUES, AND FLAMES, AND CHURCH-CONVULSIONS
HAVE SO LONG AND LOUDLY PREACHED
TO ENGLAND.**

*To my dearly beloved, the Church of Christ at Kidderminster
in Worcestershire.*

I SUPPOSE you do not only remember, that ten years ago I preached these sermons to you ; but also what schisms, what revilings of the ministers of Christ, what heresies of Ranters, Seekers, and others ; what cruelties against one another, and what remorseless overturnings of government ; and worst of all, what bold appeals to God himself, as if he were the approver of all this, did give you and me extraordinary occasions of such thoughts and lamentations as are here expressed ? But though the great mercy of God did preserve yourselves from these transgressions, and made it your lot to behold them with daily complaints and sorrows, yet I must not so flatter you as to say, that the ordinary weaknesses of Christians are not at all among you. The things which I especially loved in you, I will freely praise, which were, A special measure of humility ; a plain simplicity in religion ; a freedom from the common errors ; a readiness to receive the truth ; a catholic temper, without addictedness to any sect ; a freedom from schism, and separating ways, and a unity and unanimity in religion ; a hatred and disowning of the usurpations, and perturbations, and rebellions against the civil government, and an open bearing of your testimonies in all these cases ; together with seriousness in religion, and sober, righteous, charitable, and godly conversations. But yet, with all this, which is truly amiable, I know you have your frailties and imperfections. The weaker sort of Christians (either in knowledge or in holiness) are the greater number in the best congregation that I ever yet knew. (To say nothing of the unsound.) And what may be your case these eight years since I have been separated from your presence, I cannot tell, though, through the mercy of God, I hear not of your declining. It is our sin which hath parted us asunder, let us lay the blame upon ourselves ; I have now done expecting my ancient comforts in labouring among you any more. For these six years'

time, in which I thought my great experience had made me more capable of serving my Master better than before, his wisdom and justice have caused me to spend in grievous silence. And now my decays and disability of body are so much increased, that if I had leave, I have not strength, nor can ever reasonably expect it; therefore, once more I am glad to speak to you as I may, and shall be thankful if Authority will permit these instructions to come to your view, that the weak may have some more counsel and assistance. And if any shall miscarry, and disgrace religion, there may remain on record one more testimony, what doctrine it was that you were taught. The Lord be your teacher, and your strength, and save you from yourselves, and from this present evil world, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your servant,

RICHARD BAXTER.

October 31, 1668.

PREFACE.

READERS,

THAT you may neither misunderstand this book nor me, I owe you this pre-advertisement, That it was preached in a lecture at Kidderminster in Worcestershire, about seven or eight years ago, 1658. That the sad experience of the distempers of weak, well-meaning people (though not in that place) yet in those times, (especially of those who ran after the most gross deceivers, distracted the churches, reviled, afflicted, and busily attempted to pull down the pastors, and actually pulled down the higher powers whom God forbade them to resist,) was the chief occasion of the preaching of these sermons ; and that the special reasons for my publishing them now, are these that follow. 1. Because I perceive not that yet people are sufficiently humbled for those miscarriages, or have yet well found out their sins, which by many and sore judgments, have found them out. 2. Because I perceive that it is too ordinary to speak to weak Christians only by way of comfort, and too rare to shew them the evil of their distempers : and that the very terms are used as if they imported nothing but what is to be loved, or tenderly gainsayed. And most that hear themselves called weak Christians, do take it for a word of honouring pity, and feel in it no humbling matter of reproof. As if the comfort of being a living man, did nullify the trouble and pain of infancy, of a lethargy, a leprosy, a fever, gout or stone. The scandals which have dishonoured religion in this age, do tell us that it is not all a preacher's work to convince and convert the infidels and profane ones, but that much of it lieth in detecting hypocrisies, and humbling the weak, and healing their distempers, and saving and raising them from their falls. The thoughts of the case of such Christians as these, did tempt Augustine once to doubt whether there were not

a purgatory ; it seemed so hard to him to believe, either that men who in the rest of their lives were godly and honest, should go to hell ; or that men so guilty of particular crimes and scandals (of which their ignorance and error kept them from repenting) could go straight to heaven. And no doubt but it was the heinous sins and great distempers of men professing godliness, which caused human reason to invent and entertain this doctrine of purging-pains. But when God hath cast men into many purgatories, and yet they repent not, I fear it threateneth worse than purgatory. 3. Moreover, I remembered the request of that learned, pious, peaceable A. B. Usher, which I mentioned in the preface to my " Call to the Unconverted ;" according to which I had before published, 1. That " Call." 2. " Directions against Miscarrying in the Work of Conversion." 3. And this I intended for the third part, when I began it ; but was hindered from bringing it to the purposed perfection, (the fourth part being " Directions for Peace of Conscience," being extant long before). 4. But that which since urged me to this publication was, that the last sermon which I preached publicly, was at Blackfriars, on this text, Col. ii. 6, 7. and presently after, there came forth a book called " Farewell Sermons," among which this of mine was one. Who did it, or to what end I know not, nor doth it concern me to inquire. But I took it as an injury, both as it was done without my knowledge, and against my will, and to the offence of my superiors ; and because it was taken by the notary so imperfectly, that much of it was nonsense ; especially when some foreigners that lived in Poland, Hungary, and Helvetia, were earnest to buy this with the rest of my writings, I perceived how far the injury was like to go both against me, and many others of my brethren. Therefore, finding since, among the relics of my scattered papers, this imperfect piece which I had before written on that text, I was desirous to publish it, as for the benefit of weak Christians, so to right myself, and to cashier that farewell sermon.

If the reader will but peruse these Directions impartially, and read them as he doth the prescripts of his physicians, which are not written merely to be read, but must be daily practised whatever it cost him, as he loveth his life ; then I make no doubt, notwithstanding the weakness of the composition, but it may further the cure of his spiritual weaknesses

and distempers, and of the consequent troubles and losses of others and himself. I hope I shall not meet with many, besides malignant hypocrites, who will be so impenitent and peevish, as to fly in the face of the reprover and director, and say that I open the nakedness of many servants of Christ, to the reproach and dishonour of religion. I have told you from the word of God, that it is God's way, and must be ours, to lay the just dishonour upon the sinner, that it may not fall upon religion and on God. And that the defending or excusing odious sins, in tenderness of the persons who committed them, is the surest and worst way to bring dishonour (first or last) both upon religion and on them. A Noah, a Lot, a David, a Solomon, a Peter, &c. shall be dishonoured by God in holy record to all ages, that God may not be more dishonoured by them! And the truly penitent are willing that it should be so; and account their honour a very cheap sacrifice, to offer up to the honour of religion which they have wronged. And till you come to this, you come short of true repentance. He that defendeth his open sin (unless he could deny the fact), doth as bad as say, 'God liketh it; Christ bid me do it; the Scripture is for it, or not against it; religion taught it me, or doth not forbid it me; the godly allow it, and will do the like.' And what can be said more blasphemously against God, or more injuriously against religion, the Scriptures, and the saints? But he that confesseth his sin, doth as good as say, 'Lay all the blame on me, who do deserve it; and not on God, on Christ, on Scripture, on religion, or on the servants of God; for I learned it not from any of them, nor was encouraged to it by them; none are greater enemies to it than they; if I had hearkened to them, I had done otherwise.' It is one of the chief reasons why repentance is so necessary, because it justifieth God and godliness.

And alas, it is too late to talk of concealing those weaknesses and crimes of Christians, which are so visible before all the world! Which have had such public effects upon churches, kingdoms, and states; which have kept almost all the Christian churches, in a torn, and bleeding, woful state, for so many hundred years, to this present day, which have separated the churches of the east and west, and defiled both. And have drawn so much blood in Christian countries, and keep us yet like distracted persons, gazing strange-

ly at our nearest friends, and running away by peevish separation, from our brethren, with whom we must live in heaven; and mistakingly using those as enemies, with whom (if we are Christians as we profess) we are united in the same Head, and by the same Spirit, which is a Spirit of Love. In a word, when our faults are so conspicuous as to harden the infidels, heathens, and ungodly, and to hinder the conversion of the world; and when they sound so loud in the mouths of our common reproaching enemies; and when they have contracted so much malignity as to refuse a cure by such wars, divisions, church-desolations, plagues and flames, as we have seen, it is then too late to say to the preachers of repentance, ‘Be silent, lest you open the nakedness of Christians, and disgrace religion and the church.’ We must not be silent, lest we disgrace religion and the church to save the credit of the sinners.

Whoever readeth the holy Scriptures, and ever understood the Christian faith, must needs know that nothing in all the world, is so much against every one of our errors and misdoings. It is only for want of more religion, that any professors of religion do miscarry. Nothing but the doctrine of Christianity and godliness did at first destroy the reign of their sin; and nothing else can subdue the rest, and finish the cure. It is no disgrace to life that so many men’s lives are burdensome with sickness, which the dead are not troubled with. Nor is it any disgrace to learning, that scholars, for want of more learning, have troubled the world with their contentious disputes. Nor is it any disgrace to reason, that men’s different reasons, for want of more reason, doth set the world together by the ears. We can never magnify you enough as you are Christians and godly, unless we should ascribe more to you than your bounteous Lord hath given you, who hath made you little lower than angels, and crowned you with glory and honour; Psal. viii. 5, 6. But your sins are so much the more odious, as they are brought so near the holy presence: and as they are aggravated by greater mercies and professions. And God is so far from being reconciled, or reconcilable to any one of them, that though he see not such iniquity in Jacob, as is in heathens and the ungodly, (because it is not in them to be seen) yet he seeth more aggravated iniquity in such sins as you do commit, in many respects, than in the heathens.

And (that which is our common trouble, is) that you hurt not yourselves alone by your iniquities ; families are hurt by them ; neighbours are hurt by them ; churches are distracted by them ; kingdoms are afflicted by them ; and thousands of blind sinners are hardened and everlastingly undone by them. The ignorant husband saith, ‘ I will never follow sermons nor Scriptures, nor be so religious, while I see my wife, that maketh so much ado with religion, to be as peevish and discontented, and foul-tongued, and unkind, and contemptuous, and disobedient as those that have no religion.’ The master that is profane saith, ‘ I like not your religion, when that servant which most professeth religion in my house, is as lazy, and negligent, and as surly and saucy, and as ready to dishonour me, and answer again, and as proud of his little knowledge, as those that have no religion at all.’ The like I might say of all other relations. All the dishonour that this casteth upon grace is, that you have too little of it ; and it is so weak in you, that its victory over your flesh and passions is lamentably imperfect. A servant hearing a high commendation of a gentleman, (that he was of extraordinary wisdom and godliness, and bounty, and patience, and affability, and what not) did think with himself, ‘ How happy a man were I, if I could but dwell in this man’s house ’ which at last he procured, but ere long went away. His friend meeting him, asked him how he came so quickly to forsake his happiness ? Did not his master prove as was reported ? He answered, ‘ Yes, and better than report could make him, or I could ever have believed. But though my master was so good, my mistress was so unreasonable, and clamorous, and cruel, that she would beat us, and pull us by the hair, and throw scalding water upon us ; and there was no living with her.’ So faith I hope is the master in your hearts ; and that is as good as can be well believed ; but the flesh is mistress, which should be but a servant ; and that maketh such troublesome work with some of you, that some quiet-natured infidels are less vexatious companions than you. Nay, and I wonder if you can be very confident of your own sincerity, as long as such fleshly vices, and headstrong passions do keep up the power of a mistress in you. I wonder if you do not fear, lest (as a woman said, ‘ I will call my husband Lord with Sarah, if I may have my will fulfilled,’ so) grace and faith should have no more than the

regent titles, while your flesh hath so much of its will fulfilled. I know too many cheat themselves into comfort, with the false opinion, that because they have a party in them that striveth against their sins, it is a certain sign that they have the Spirit and are sanctified, though the flesh even in the main doth get the victory. And I know that many have sincerity indeed, who yet have many a foil by boisterous passions, and fleshly inclinations : but I am sure, till you know which party is predominant, and truly beareth the governing sway, you can never know whether you are sincere. As once a servant, when his master and mistress were fighting, answered one at the door, who desired to speak with the master of the house, ‘ You must stay till I see who gets the better before I can tell you who is the master of the house.’ So truly I fear the conflict is so hard with many Christians, between the Spirit and the flesh, and holdeth so long in a doubtful state ; and sense, and passion, and unbelief, and pride, and worldliness, and selfishness prevail so much, that they may stay themselves a great while before they can be well resolved which is master. For (to prosecute my similitude) in innocent man, spiritual reason was absolutely master, and fleshly sense was an obsequious servant, (though yet it had an appetite which needed government and restraint). In wicked men, the fleshly sense and appetite is master, and reason is a servant, though reason and the motions of the Spirit may make some resistance. In strong Christians spiritual reason is master, and the fleshly sense and appetite is a servant, but a boisterous and rebellious servant, tamed according to the degrees of grace and spiritual victory ; like a horse that is broken and well ridden, but oft needeth the spur, and oft the reins. So that a Paul may cry out, “ O wretched man,” &c. In a weak Christian the Spirit is master, but the flesh is mistress, and is not kept in the servitude which it was made for, as it ought. And, therefore, his life is blemished with scandals, and his soul with many foul corruptions ; he is a trouble to himself and others. The good which he doth, is done with much reluctancy, and weakness ; and the evil which he forbeareth, is oftentimes very hardly borne. His flesh hath so much power left, that he is usually uncertain of his own sincerity ; and yet too patient both with his sin and his uncertainty. And he is many times a greater troubler of the

church, than many moderate unbelievers. The hypocrite, or almost-christian, hath the flesh for his master, as other wicked men, but reason and the commoner grace of the Spirit, may be as mistress with him; and may have so much power and respect, above a state of utter servitude, as may delude him into a confident conceit, that grace hath the victory, and that he is truly spiritual; when yet the supremacy is exercised by the flesh. "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.—He shall not be hurt of the second death.—He shall eat of the hidden manna.—He shall have power over the nations.—I will give him the morning star. I will confess him before my Father and the angels.—He shall be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more. I will grant to him to sit with me in my throne;" Rev. ii. 7. 11. 17. 26. 28. iii. 5. 12. 21.

RICHARD BAXTER.

1665.

DIRECTIONS

TO

THE CONVERTED,

FOR THEIR

ESTABLISHMENT, GROWTH, AND PERSEVERANCE.

PART I.

COLOSSIANS II. 6, 7.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

As ministers are called in God's word the fathers of those that are converted by their ministry (1 Cor. iv. 14, 15.), so are they likened thus far to the mothers, that they travail as in birth of their people's souls, till Christ be formed in them; Gal. iv. 19. And as Christ saith, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world;" John xvi. 21. So while we are seeking and hoping for your conversion, and are as in travail of you till you are born again; not only our labour, but much more our fears of you, and cares for you, and compassion of you in your danger and misery, doth make the time seem very long to us; and O what happy men should we think ourselves, if all or the most part of our people were converted! And when we see but now and then one come home, we remember no more the anguish of our fears and sorrows, nor think all our la-

bours ill bestowed, for joy that a Christian is new-born unto Christ. But yet for all the mother's joy, her work, her care, her sorrow, is not at an end as soon as she is delivered. Many a foul hand, and many a troublesome hour, and many a waking night, she must have with the child, whose birth she so rejoiced in; and after that, many a year of care and labour to bring it up, and provide for it in the world; and in her old age, when she expecteth from her children the love, and honour, and thanks, and comfort that was due to her as a mother, and for all her labour, and care, and pains, perhaps one child will prove kind, and of another she must take it well that he is not very unkind, and a third perhaps may break her heart; and yet she must still be a mother to them all. And so it befalls us; when we have greatly rejoiced at the real and seeming conversion of now and then one of our hearers, our work with them is not at an end, nor may we lay aside our care and labour for them. We have for some years (usually) the nurse's work to do; and many a troublesome day and night, the weakness, the uncleanness, the peevish, childish exceptions, the querulous and quarrelsome disposition of our beloved converts, will put us to. And after all that, when they begin to go on their own legs, and think themselves sufficient for themselves without our help, many a fall and hurt they may catch, and many fallings out may they have with one another, to the great trouble of themselves and us. And when they are grown up to strength of parts and gifts, some that seem sincere may turn prodigals or apostates, and some fall a quarrelling about the inheritance, and make most woful divisions, in Christ's family; and some perhaps despise us that have thus spent our days and strength in studies, and prayers, and fears, and cares, and labours, for their salvation; yea, perhaps be ready to spit in our faces, and reproach our persons, yea, and our very office and calling itself, as the experience of these times of ours, seconding the experience of all ages of the church before us, doth, alas! too evidently and openly testify. And yet some will be faithful, and constant, and thankful to Christ and us. And that all might be so, for Christ's sake and their own, must still be our care, and desires, and endeavours. In these several cases, we find blessed Paul with his children in his Epistles, sometimes rejoicing with them in their steadfastness; sometimes defending himself and his

ministry against their unkind and childish wranglings; as with the Corinthians you may find him; sometimes he is put (but seldom) to a severe correction of the obstinate, delivering them up to satan, for a warning to the rest; sometimes he is fain to watch with them, as in their sickness, when they are infected with some dangerous error, or other disease; and is brought even to make great question of their lives, lest he hath laboured for them in vain, and themselves have run in vain, and lest they be fallen from grace, and Christ should profit them nothing; receiving himself no better requital of all his labours from them that once would have pulled out his eyes for him, than to be taken "for their enemy, because he tells them the truth; and the more he loveth them, the less to be loved of them;" as you may read in Gal. i. 6, 7. iii. 1, 3, 4. iv. 11, 14—16, 19, 20. v. 2, 4, 7. But with the most we find him, as one that is yet between hope and fear of them, directing and exhorting them to spiritual steadfastness, and growth, and perseverance to the end; and this is the work which we here find him upon with the Colossians in this text; which containeth, 1. A supposition of the work (the great work) already done; viz. "They have received Christ Jesus the Lord." 2. An inference of further duty, and exhortation thereto, which in sum is their confirmation and progress. The parts of this duty are expressed in several metaphors. The first is taken from a tree or other plant, and is called our "rooting in Christ." After the receiving of Christ, there is a further rootedness in him to be sought. The second is taken from a building, and is called, "being built up in him," as a house is upon the foundation. All the work is not done when the chief cornerstone and foundation is laid. The third part is taken from those pillars and stronger parts of the building, which are firm upon the foundation, and it is called a being "stablished or confirmed in the faith." And having made mention of faith, lest they should hearken to innovations and the conceits of men under pretence of faith, he addeth, "as ye have been taught," to shew them what faith or religion it is that they must be established in; even that which by the apostles they had been taught. And lastly, he expresseth the measure that they should aim at, and one special way in which their faith should be exercised, "abounding therein with thanksgiv-

ing." The matter is not great, whether we take the relative to refer to Christ, and read it with the vulgar Latin, "abounding in him with thanksgiving;" or as the Ethiopic, "abound with thanksgiving to him;" or whether we take it as relating to thanksgiving itself, as the Arabic translator, and some Greek copies have it, "abounding in thanksgiving;" or as the ordinary Greek copies, and the Syriac translator, referring it to faith, "abounding in it (that is, in that faith) with thanksgiving." For in the upshot it comes to the same, "to abound in Christ," and, "to abound in faith in Christ," and, "to abound in a believing thanksgiving to Christ." And all this is comprehended in one foregoing general of "walking in Christ;" the whole life of a Christian being divided into these two parts, Receiving Christ, and, Walking in him. Here are these several terms therefore briefly to be opened. 1. What is meant by, "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord." 2. What is meant by "walking in him." 3. What by "being rooted in him." 4. What by "being built up in him." 5. What by "being confirmed or stablished in the faith." 6. What by this directive limitation, "as ye have been taught." 7. What by "abounding therein with thanksgiving."

And for the first, you must observe the act and the object. The act is "receiving;" the object is "Christ Jesus the Lord." To receive Christ, is not only (as some annotators mistake it) to receive his doctrine, though it is certain that his doctrine must be received, and the rest is implied in this. But when the understanding receiveth the Gospel by assent, the will also accepteth or receiveth Christ as he is offered, by consent; and both these together are the receiving of Christ; that is, the true justifying faith of God's elect. It is not therefore a physical, passive reception, as wood receiveth the fire, and as our souls receive the graces of the Spirit; but it is a moral reception, or reputative, which is active and metaphorical. This will be better understood when the object is considered, which is, "Christ Jesus the Lord." To receive Christ as Christ, or the anointed Messiah, and as the Saviour and our Lord, is to believe that he is such, and to consent that he be such to us, and to trust in him, and resign ourselves to him as such. The relation we do indeed receive by a proper passive reception; I mean our relation of being the redeemed members, sub-

jects, disciples of this Christ. But the person of Christ we only receive by such an active, moral, reputative reception, as a servant by consent receives a master, a patient by consent receives a physician, a wife by consent receives a husband, and as a scholar or pupil by consent receives a teacher or tutor, or the subjects by consent receive a sovereign. So that it is the same thing that is called, "receiving Jesus the Lord," and, "believing in him," as it is expounded, John i. 12. There are three great observable acts of faith essential to it; the first is, Assent to the truth of the Gospel. The second is, Consent or acceptance of Christ and life, as the offered good. The third is, Affiance in Christ for the accomplishing of the ends of his office. Now the word 'faith' doth most properly express the first act and the last, and the word 'receiving' doth most properly express the middlemost; but whichever term is used, when it is justifying faith that is spoken of, all three are intended or included. By what hath been said, you may discern whether you have received Christ or not; for your faith may be known by these acts which are its parts. 1. If you sincerely believe the Gospel to be true; which must be with a belief so strong at least, as that you are resolved to venture your happiness upon this belief, and let go all for the hope that is set before you. 2. If an offered Christ, in his relation as a full and perfect Saviour, be heartily welcome to you. If you consent to the Gospel offer, and are but truly willing to be his, and that he be yours in that relation. Faith is not only called a "receiving of Christ," but is oft expressed by this term of "willing" him; and therefore the promise is to "who-soever will;" Rev. xxii. 17. and the wicked are denied a part in Christ, because "they will not have him reign over them;" Luke xix. 27. or "will not come to him that they may have life;" John vi. 40. even because they "would have none of him;" Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. which is, because they are not true believers or disciples of Christ. 3. If you thus by consent take Christ for your Saviour, Teacher, and Lord, it must needs follow that you fiducially rely upon him, or trust him to accomplish the ends of his relations; that you trust to him for deliverance from the guilt, and power, and punishment of sin, and for quickening, strengthening, and preserving grace, and for everlasting life, that you resign yourselves up to him as his disciples, to learn of him,

with a confidence or trust, that he will infallibly teach you the way to happiness. And that you also give up yourselves to him as his subjects, with a trust that he will govern you in truth and righteousness, in order to your salvation, and will defend you from destroying enemies. This much is of the very being of faith, or the "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord;" and these parts are inseparable; he that hath one in truth, hath all. Whenever we find in Scripture, the promise of justification or salvation made to us, if we believe, it is this believing, and none but this, that is intended. It is not only believing in Christ as a sacrifice or priest, that is the faith which justifieth, and believing in him as a Teacher or Lord, that sanctifieth: the effects are not thus parcelled out to several essential parts of this same faith; but it is this one entire faith in all these essential parts, that is the undivided condition of all these benefits; and in that way of a condition of the free promise it doth procure them. So much for the meaning of the first words, "Receiving Christ Jesus the Lord." I will be briefer about the next. The second, is, "walking in him," which is no more but the living as Christians, when once we are become Christians, and using that Christ to the ends which we received him for, when once we have received him. Two things are necessary to such as we, that have lost our way: the first is, to get into the right way (and that is to get into Christ, who is the way): the other is to travel on when we are in it: for it is not enough to bring us to our journey's end, that we have found out the right way. The next word to be explained, is, "rooted;" which doth not intimate that any are really planted into Christ, without any rooting in him at all; but by "rooted," is meant, "deeply rooted;" for the roots increase under ground, as well as the tree above ground. Rooting hath two ends, and both are here implied: the first is for the firmness of the tree, that blustering winds may not overturn it. The second is for nutriment, that it may receive that nourishment from the earth, which may cause its preservation, growth, and fruitfulness. This is the rootedness of Christians in Christ, that they may be confirmed in him against all assaults, and may draw from him that nutriment that is necessary to their growth and fruit. The next term is, "built up in him." No house consisteth of a bare foundation. Five things are expressly contained in

our being "built up in him." The first is, that we are united or conjoined to him, as the building is on the foundation. The second is, that we rest wholly on him as our support, as the building doth on the foundation. The third is, that we are also conjoined one unto another, and are become one spiritual building in the Lord. The fourth is, that the fabric doth increase in bigness, as the house doth by being built up; so that it importeth our increase in grace, and the increase of the church by us. The fifth is, the fitness of the building to its intended ends and use; till it be built up, it is not fit for habitation; and till Christians are built up, God hath not that use of them to which he doth intend them. The next term is, "stablished or confirmed in the faith," which signifieth but that strengthening and fixing of us that may prevent our falling or shaking; and it compriseth these two things: first, that we be soundly bottomed on Christ, who is our foundation. And secondly, that we be cemented and firmly joined to each other. And this comprehendeth their stability in the doctrine of faith: and therefore he addeth "as ye have been taught," to fortify them against heresies, which indeed are all but novelties; that so they may know how to try the doctrines that afterwards should be offered them, and stick fast to that which the apostles taught. He next requireth them to "abound therein," to let them know that as it is no small matters that they expect by Christ, so they should not rest in small degrees of grace or duty; but especially the duty of "thanksgiving," which is an evangelical and celestial duty, and so admirably beseems a people that have partaken of such admirable salvation, and is so suitable to our mercies, and our condition, and God's just expectation. As it is love and grace, whose eternal praise is designed by the Gospel, and are magnified in the church by the Redeemer's great and blessed work: so it is returns of love, and praise, and joy, that should be the most abounding or overflowing part of all our Christian affections and performances. After this explication, you may see that the sense of the text lieth plain in this proposition.

Doct. 'Those that have savingly received Christ Jesus the Lord, must be so far from resting here as if all were done, that they must spend the rest of their days in walking in him, being rooted and built up in him, and stablished in

the faith as the apostles taught it, and abounding in it, especially with joyful praises to our Redeemer.'

And because that my design is only to direct young Christians how they may come to be established and confirmed in Christ, I shall therefore pass over all other things that the full handling of this text requireth; and shall only give you, I. A short intimation here, what this confirmation and stability is, (which shall be more fully opened to you in the Directions). II. And shew you the need of seeking it. And III. How you may attain it.

I. This confirmation is the habitual strength of grace, distinct from present actual confirmation by the influence of grace from God; for though God may in an instant confirm a weak person against some particular temptation, by his free assistance, yet that is not it which we have here to speak of, but habitual confirmation in a state of grace. And ordinarily we may expect, that God's co-operating assisting grace should bear some proportion with our habitual grace. Even as in nature he concurreth with the strongest men, to do greater works than he causeth the weak to do; and with the wisest men to understand more than the foolish do: I say but that ordinarily it is thus.

A confirmed Christian as contrary to a weak one, 1. Is not to be judged of by his freedom from all scruples, doubts, or fears. 2. Nor by his eminency in men's esteem or observation. 3. Nor by his strength of memory. 4. Or freedom of utterance in praying, preaching, or discourse. 5. Or by his seemly deportment and courtesy towards others. 6. Nor by his sedate, calm, and lovely temper, and freedom from some haste and heats which other tempers are more prone to. 7. Nor by a man-pleasing or dissembling faculty to bridle the tongue, when it would open the corruption of the mind, and to suppress all words which would make others know how bad the heart is. There are many endowments laudable and desirable, which will not shew so much as sincerity in grace; and much less a state of confirmation and stability.

But confirmation lieth in the great degree of all those graces which constitute a Christian. And the great degree appeareth in the operations of them. As, 1. When holiness is as a new nature in us, and giveth us a promptitude to holy actions, and maketh us free and ready to them, and

maketh them easy and familiar to us; whereas the weak go heavily, and can scarce drive on and force their minds. 2. When there is a constancy or frequency of holy actions; which sheweth the strength and stability of holy inclinations. 3. When they are powerful to bear down oppositions and temptations, and can get over the greatest impediments in the way, and make an advantage of all resistance, and despise the most splendid baits of sin. 4. When it is still getting ground, and drawing the soul upward, and nearer to God, its rest and end: and when the heart groweth more heavenly and divine, and stranger to earth and earthly things. 5. And when holy and heavenly things are more sweet and delectable to the soul, and are sought and used with more love and pleasure. All these do shew, that the operations of grace are vigorous and strong, and consequently that the habits are so also.

And this confirmation should be found, 1. In the understanding. 2. In the will. 3. In the affections. 4. In the life.

1. When the mind of man hath a larger comprehension of the truths of God, and the order, and method, and usefulness of every truth: and a deeper apprehension of the certainty of them, and of the goodness of the matter expressed in them: when knowledge and faith come nearest unto sight or intention, and we have the fullest, the truest, and the firmest and most certain apprehension of things revealed and unseen; when the nature, and the reasons, and the ends and benefits of the Christian religion are all most clearly, orderly, decently, constantly and powerfully printed on the mind, then is that mind in a confirmed state.

2. When the will is guided by such a confirmed understanding, and is not brutishly resolved, he knoweth not for what or why: when light hath fixed it in such resolutions as are past all notable doubtings, deliberations, waverings, or unwilling backwardness: and a man is in seeking God and his salvation, and avoiding known sin, as a natural man is about the questions, Whether he should preserve his life, and make provision for it? And whether he should poison, or famish, or torment himself? When the inclination of the will to God, and heaven, and holiness, are most like to its natural inclination to good as good, and to its own felicity: and its action is so free as to have least indetermina-
tion, and

to be most like to natural, necessary acts, as those are of blessed spirits in heaven: when the least intimation from God prevaieth, and the will doth answer him with readiness and delight. And when it taketh pleasure to trample upon all opposition, and when all that can be offered to corrupt the heart, and draw it to sin, and loosen it from God, prevaieth but as so much filth and dung would do; Phil. iii. 7—9. This is a confirmed state of will.

3. When the affections do proceed from such a will, and are ready to assist, excite, and serve it, and to carry us on in necessary duties: when the lower affections of fear and sorrow do cleanse, and restrain, and prepare the way, and the higher affections of love and delight adhere to God, and desire and hope do make out after him, and set the soul on just endeavours; when fear and grief have less to do, and are delivering up the heart still more and more to the possession of holy delight and love: and when those affections which are rather profound than very sensible immediately towards God himself, are sensible towards his word, his servants, his graces, and his ways, and against all sin; then are the affections, and so the man in a confirmed state.

4. When ourselves, our time, and all that we have, are taken to be God's and not our own, and are entirely and unreservedly resigned to him, and used for him: when we study our duty, and trust him for our reward: when we live as those that have much more to do for heaven than for earth, and with God than with man or any creature: when our consciences are absolutely subjected to the authority and laws of God, and bow not to competitors: when we are habitually disposed as his servants to be constantly employed in his works, and make it our calling and business in the world; as judging that we have nothing to do on earth, but with God, or for God: when we keep not up any secret desires and hopes of a worldly felicity, nor purvey for the pleasure of the flesh under the cloak of faith and piety, but subdue the flesh as our most dangerous enemy, and can easily deny its appetite and concupiscence: when we guard all our senses, and keep our passions, thoughts and tongues, in obedience to the holy law: when we do not inordinately set up ourselves in our esteem or desire, above or against our neighbour and his welfare; but love him as ourselves, and seek his good, and resist his hurt as heartily as our own;

and love the godly with a love of complacency, and the ungodly with a love of benevolence, though they be our enemies: when we are faithful in all our relations, and have judgment to discern our duty, that we run not into extremes; and skill, and readiness, and pleasure in performing it, and patience under all our sufferings; this is the life of a confirmed Christian, (in various degrees, as their strength is various).

II. And now I shall proceed to persuade such to value and seek this confirmation, lest with dull, unprepared minds my following Directions should be lost; and then I shall give you the Directions themselves, which are the part that is principally intended. And first for the Motives.

1. Consider that your first entrance into Christianity is an engagement to proceed; your receiving Christ obligeth you to walk and grow up in him. A fourfold obligation your very Christianity layeth upon you, to grow stronger, and to persevere. (1.) The first is from the very nature of it; even from the office of Christ, and the use and ends to which we do receive him. You receive Christ as a Physician of your diseased souls; and doth not this engage you to go on to use his medicines till you are cured? What do men choose a physician for, but to heal them? It were but a foolish patient that would say, 'Though my disease be deadly, yet now I have chosen the best physician, I have no more to do; I doubt not of recovery.' You took Christ for a Saviour, which engageth you to use his saving means, and submit to his saving works. You took him for your Teacher and Master, and gave up yourselves to be his disciples, and what sense was in all this, if you did not mean to proceed in learning of him? It is a silly conceit for any man to think that he is a good scholar, merely because he hath chosen a good master or tutor, without any further learning of him. When Christ sent out his apostles, it was for these two works; first, to disciple nations, and baptize them; and then to go on in teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commandeth them; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Christ is the way to the Father; but to what purpose did you come into this way, if you meant not to travel on in it?

(2.) Moreover, when you became Christians, you entered a solemn covenant with Christ; and bound yourselves by a vow, to be faithful to him to the death: and this vow is upon

you. "It is better not to vow, than to vow and not perform;" Eccles.v.5. In taking him to be the Captain of your salvation, and listing yourselves under him, and taking this oath of fidelity to him, you did engage yourselves to fight as faithful soldiers, under his conduct and command to your lives' end. And as it is a foolish soldier that thinks that he hath no more to do but list himself and take colours, and need not fight; so it is a foolish and ungodly covenant that thinks he hath nothing to do but to promise, and may be excused from performance, because that promising was enough, when the promise was purposely to bind him to perform.

(3.) Moreover, when you became Christians, you put yourselves under the laws of Christ; and these laws require you to go further till you are confirmed; so that you must go on, or renounce your obedience to Christ.

(4.) Lastly, when you became Christians, you received such exceeding mercies, as do oblige you to go much higher in your affections, and much further in your obedience to God. A man that is newly snatched as from the jaws of hell, and hath received the free forgiveness of his sins, and is put into such a state of blessedness as we are, must needs feel abundance of obligations upon him, to proceed to stronger resolutions and affections, and not to stop in those low beginnings. So that if you lay these four things together, you will perceive that the very purpose of your receiving Christ was that you might walk in him, and be confirmed and built up.

2. Consider also, that conversion is not sound if you are not heartily desirous to increase. Grace is not true, if there be not a desire after more; yea, if you desire not perfection itself. An infant is not born to continue an infant, for that were to be a monster; but to grow up unto manhood. As the kingdom of Christ in the world is likened by him to a little leaven, and to a grain of mustard-seed, in the beginning, which afterward makes a wonderful increase; so his kingdom in the soul is of the same nature too. If you are contented with that measure of holiness that you have, you have none at all, but a shadow and conceit of it. Let those men think of this that stint themselves in holiness, and plead for a moderation in it, as if it were intemperance or fury to love God or fear him, or seek him or obey him, any more than

they do ; or as if we were in danger of excess in these. If ever these men had feelingly, and by experience known what holiness is, they would never have been possessed with such conceits as these.

3. Consider what abundance of labour hath been lost, and what hopes have been frustrated, for want of proceeding to a rooted confirmation. I say not that such were truly sanctified ; but I say, they were in a very hopeful way, and went far, and by going farther might have attained to salvation. The heart of many a minister hath been glad to see their hearers humbled, and bemoaning sin, and changing their minds and lives, and becoming forward professors of godliness ; when a few years' time hath turned all this joy into sorrow ; and one of our hopeful, seeming converts doth grow cold, and lose his former forwardness ; another falls to desperate sensuality, and turns drunkard, or fornicator, or gamester ; another turns worldling, and drowneth all his seeming zeal in the love of riches, and the cares of this life ; and another, (if not many to one,) is deluded by some deceiver, and infected with some deadly errors, and casts off duty, and sets himself, like a hired instrument of hell, to divide the church, oppose the Gospel, and reproach, and slander, and rail at the ministers and professors of it, and to weaken the hands of the builders, and strengthen the ungodly, and serve the secret enemies of the truth. Those that once comforted our hearts in the hopes of their conversion, do break our hearts by their apostacy and subversion, and become greater hindrances to the work of Christ, and greater plagues to the church of God, than those that never professed to be religious. Those that were wont to join with us in holy worship, and went up with us to the house of God as our companions, do afterwards despise both worshippers and worship. Whereas if these men had been rooted and confirmed, you should never have seen them fall into this misery. O how many prayers, and confessions, and duties do these men lose ! How many years have some of them seemed to be religious, and after all have proved apostate miscreants ; and the world, and the flesh, and pride, and error swallow up all. See then what need you have to be rooted, confirmed, and built up in Christ.

4. Consider also, how much of the work of your salvation is yet to do, when you are converted. You have hap-

pily begun, but you have not finished. You have hit of the right way, but you have your journey yet to go. You have chosen the best commander, and fellow-soldiers, but you have many a battle yet to fight. If you are Christians indeed, you know yourselves that you have many a corruption to resist and conquer, and many a temptation yet to overcome, and many a necessary work to do. And there is a necessity of these afterworks as well as of the first. For these are the use and end of your conversion, that you may "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts;" Tit. ii. 11, 12. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;" Eph. ii. 10. And how can infants go through all these works? Which of you would desire an infant or cripple to be your servant? But though God be in this more merciful than man, yet he may well expect that you should not be still infants. What work are you like to make him, in this decrepid and weak condition? O pitiful blindness! that any man that knows that he hath a soul to save, should think an infant's strength proportionable to those works and difficulties that stand between him and everlasting life! In the matters of this life, you feel the need and worth of strength; you will not think an infant fit to plough or sow, or reap or mow, or travel or play the soldier, and yet will you rest satisfied with an infant-strength, to do those great and matchless works, which your salvation lieth on?

5. Moreover, the weak, unconfirmed souls are usually full of trouble, and live without that assurance of God's love, and that spiritual peace and comfort, which others do possess. One would think no other argument should be necessary to make men weary of their spiritual weaknesses and diseases, than the pain and trouble that always attendeth them. It is more pain to a sick man to travel a mile, than to a sound man to go ten. To the lame or feeble, every step hath pain, and all that they do is grievous to them; when far more would be a recreation to one that is in health. O therefore delight not in your own languishings! Choose not to live in pain and sorrow! But strive after confirmation and growth in grace, that overgrowing your infirmities you may overcome your sad complaints and groans, and may be acquainted with the comfortable life of the confirmed. O

how roundly and cheerfully would you go through your work ! How easy, and sweet, and profitable would it prove to you, if once you were strong, confirmed Christians ! Alas ! the souls of those that are not confirmed, lie open to every temptation of the malicious enemy of their peace ; and how small a matter will disquiet and unsettle them ! Every passage of Scripture which they understand not, and which seems to make against them, will disturb them. A minister cannot preach so plainly or so cautiously, but somewhat which they understand not will be matter of their disquiet. Providences will trouble them, because they understand them not. Afflictions will be bitter to the mind as well as the body, and will immoderately perplex them, because they understand them not, or have not strength to bear them and improve them. The sweeter mercies of prosperity will much lose their sweetness, for want of holy wisdom and strength to digest them. And what man would choose such a weak and languishing state as this, before a confirmed, healthful state ? Will you run up and down for physic when you are sick ? And will you no more regard the health and stability, and spiritual peace and vigour of your souls ?

6. Moreover, it is the strong confirmed Christian that hath the true use and benefit of all God's ordinances. Meat is digested by the healthful stomach, and it is seen upon them ; and we use to say, it is not lost ; it is sweet to them, and doth them good, and they are strengthened more by it ; and so is the confirmed Christian by God's ordinances. But to the weak, unconfirmed soul, how much of the means of grace is even as lost ! How little sweetness do they find in means, and how little good can they say they get by them ! I deny not but some good they get, and that they must use them still ; for though the sick have little relish of his meat, yet he cannot live long without it ; and though it breed not strength or health, yet it maintaineth that languishing life ; but this is all, or almost all. What a sad thing is this to yourselves and unto us, when ministers that are as the nurses of the church, or stewards of the household, to give them all their meat in due season, must see that all that ever they can do for you, will do no more than keep you alive ! Yea, how often are you quarrelling with your food, and you do not like it : or you cannot get it down, something still ails it for matter or manner ; or else if

the minister displease you, your feeble stomachs do loath the food, because you like not the cook that dresseth it, or because his hands are not so clean as you desire. "The full soul loathed an honeycomb, but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet;" Prov. xxvii. 7. Or if you get it down, you can hardly keep it, but are ready to cast it up to our faces. And thus a great deal of our labour is lost with you, holy doctrine lost, and sacraments and other ordinances lost, because you have not strength to digest them. Labour therefore to be stablished and built up.

7. I beseech you, look upon the face of the world, and see whether it have not need of the strongest help. Whereas the weak and sick are burdensome to others, rather than fit to help the distressed. It is a multitude among us, and abroad in the world, that are ignorant and ungodly, and in the depth of misery; and if there be but a few to help them, those few should not be babes. Abundance of this multitude are obstinate in their sin, blind and wilful, captivated by the devil, and have sold themselves to do evil: and shall such miserable souls as these, have none but children or sick folks to help them? I tell you, sirs, their diseases prove too hard for the most skilful physicians; it will put the wisest man in England to it, to persuade one obstinate enemy of godliness to the hearty love of a holy life; or to cure one old superstitious person of his self-conceitedness; or one covetous person of his love of the world; or one old drunkard or glutton of his sensuality. How then will silly, ignorant Christians be able to persuade them? I know it is not the ability of the instrument, but the will of God that is the principal cause; but yet God useth to work by instruments according to their fitness for the work. What a case is that hospital in where all are sick, and no healthful persons among them to help them! Poor weak Christians! you are not able much to help one another; how much less to help the dead ungodly world! Woe to the world if it had no better helpers! And woe to yourselves if you had not the help of stronger than yourselves (seeing it is God's way to work by means). Alas, a child or sick person is so unfit to labour for the family, and to work for others, that they are the burdens of the family, and must be provided for by others; they are so unmeet to help others in their weakness, that they must be carried, or attended and waited on

themselves. What a life is this to be the burdens of the church, when you might be the pillars of the church; to be so blind and lame, when you might be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.

I speak not this to extenuate God's mercies to you; nor to undervalue the great felicity of the saints, even the poorest and weakest of them. I know that Christ is tender of the weakest that are sincere, and will not forsake them. But though you are so far above the dead world, even in the bed of your groaning and languishing, yet, O how far are you below the confirmed, healthful Christian? You are happy in being alive, but you are unhappy in being so diseased and weak. You are happy in being of the family, and fellow-citizens with the saints; but you are unhappy in being so useless, and unprofitable, and burdensome; for indeed you live but as the poor of the parish, not only on the alms of Christ, for so we do all, but on the alms of your brethren's assistance and support; and I know that in worldly matters that you will rather labour with your hands, that you may have to give to them that need, than be troublesome to others, and live upon charity; Eph. iv. 28. I know that the time is not yet come, that there shall not be a beggar in Israel; I mean one that needs not our continual relief: "the poor we shall have always with us;" even the poor in grace to exercise our charity; and I know that the strong must bear with their infirmities, and exercise compassion on them. But yet you should remember the words of Christ, "It is more honourable to give than to receive;" and therefore be persuaded to bestir yourselves for spiritual health, and strength, and riches, that the multitudes of needy, miserable souls may have some help from you; and that when they come to your doors, you may not turn them away with so cold an answer, 'Alas, we have nothing for ourselves.' Were you but strong confirmed Christians, what blessings might you be to all about you; what a stay to the places where you live! "Your lips would feed many as a tree of life. The ear that heard you would bless you, and the eye that saw you would bear you witness;" Job xxix. 11. You would be to poor souls, as bountiful rich men are to their bodies, the support and relief of many that are needy. You would "not eat your morsels alone, nor would you see any perish for lack of clothing, but the loins of the poor would

bless you ;” Job xxxi. 17—20. O pity the poor world, that needeth more than children’s help, and grow up into confirmation. O pity the poor church that abounds with weaklings, that is pestered with childish self-conceited quarrellers, and needeth more than children’s help ; and grow up to a confirmation. O pity yourselves, and live not still in so childish, sickly, and beggarly a condition, when the way of riches and health is before you ; but up and be doing till you have attained confirmation.

8. Yea, this is not all ; you do not only deny the church your assistance, but most of the troubles and divisions of of the church, are from such unsettled weaklings as you. In all ages almost these have made the church more work than the heathen persecutors did with fire and sword. These novices, as Paul calleth them, that is, young beginners in religion, are they that most commonly are “ puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil ;” 1 Tim. iii. 6. These are they that are easiest deceived by seducers, as being not able to make good the truth, nor to confute the plausible reasonings of the adversaries ; and withal, they have not that rooted love to the truth and ways of God, which should hold them fast ; and they quickly yield like cowardly soldiers, that are able to make but small resistance. And as Paul speaks, they are “ like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ;” Eph. iv. 14. If you will still continue children, what better can we expect of you, but thus to be tossed and carried about. Thus you gratify satan and seducers, when you little think on it : and thus you harden the ungodly in their way ; and thus you grieve the hearts of the godly, and especially of the faithful guides of the flocks. Alas ! that so many of the children of the church should become the scourges and troublers of the church ; and should set their teeth so deep in the breasts that were drawn out for their nourishment ! If you were never drawn to do any thing to the reproach of the church, yet what a grief must it be to us, to see so many of yourselves miscarry ! ‘ Ah !’ thinks a poor minister, ‘ what hopes had I once of these professors ; and are they come to this ?’ O mark sirs, the apostle’s warning, Heb. xiii. 9. “ Be not carried about with divers and strange

doctrines." And his way of prevention is, that the heart be established with grace.

9. Consider also, that it is a dishonour to Christ, that so many of his family should be such weaklings; so mutable, and unsettled, and unprofitable as you are! I do not mean that it is any real dishonour to him; for if all the world should forsake him, they would dishonour themselves, and not him, with any competent judge: as it would dishonour the beholders more than the sun, if all the world should say that it is darkness. But you are guilty of dishonouring him in the eyes of the misguided world. O what a reproach it is to godliness, that so many professors should be so ignorant and imprudent; and so many so giddy and inconstant; and so many that manifest so little of the glory of their holy profession! All the enemies of Christ without the church, are not capable of dishonouring him so much as you, that bear his name, and wear his livery! While your graces are weak, your corruptions will be strong; and all those corruptions will be the dishonour of your profession. Will it not break your hearts to hear the ungodly pointing at you as you pass by, to say, 'Yonder goes a covetous professor;' or, 'Yonder goes a proud, or a tippling, or a contentious professor?' If you have any love to God, and sense of his dishonour, methinks such sayings should touch you at the heart! While you are weak and unconfirmed, you will, like children, stumble at every stone, and catch many a fall; and yield to temptations, which the stronger easily resist: and then, being scandalous, all your faults by foolish men will be charged on your religion. If you do but speak an ill word of another, or rail, or deceive, or overreach in bargaining, or fall into any scandalous opinions or practice, your religion must bear all the blame with the world. Ever since I can remember, it hath been one of the principal hindrances of men's conversion, and strengtheners of the wicked in their way, that the godly were accounted a sort of peevish, unpeaceable, covetous, proud, self-seeking persons; which was a slander as to many, but too much occasioned by the scandalousness of some. And methinks you should be afraid of that woe from Christ, "Woe be to him by whom offence cometh." If you be children, you may have the woe of sharp castigations; and if you be hypocrites, you shall have the woe of everlasting sufferings. The world can judge no

further than they see. And when they see professors of holiness to be so like to common men, and in some things worse than many of them, what can you expect but that they despise religion, and judge of it by the professors of it, and say, 'If this be their religion, let them keep it to themselves, we are as well without it as they are with it.' And thus will the holy ways of God be vilified through you. If you will not excel others in the beauty of your conversations, that in this glass the world may see the beauty of your religion, you must expect that they should take it but for a common thing, which bringeth forth but common fruits, to their discerning. You should be such that God may boast of, and the church may boast of, to the face of the accuser; then would you be an honour to the church, when God may say of you as he did of Job: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil;" Job i. 8. If we could say so of you to the malignant enemies, 'See what men the godly are, there is none such among you; men of holiness, wisdom, uprightness, sobriety, meekness, patience, peaceable, and harmless, living wholly to God, as strangers on earth, and citizens of heaven,' then you would be ornaments to your holy profession. Were you such Christians as the old Christians were (Acts iv.), we might boast of you then to the reproaching adversaries.

10. Moreover, till you are confirmed and built up, you may too easily be made the instruments of satan, to further his designs. The weakness of your understandings, and the strength of your passions, and especially the interest that carnal self hath remaining in you, may lay you open to temptations, and engage you in many a cause of satan, to take his part against the truth. And how sad a case is this, to any that have felt the love of Christ! Have you been warmed with his wondrous love, and washed with his blood, and saved by his matchless mercy? And may it not even break your hearts to think, that after all this, you should be drawn by satan to wound your Lord, to abuse his honour, to resist his cause, to hurt his church, and to confirm his enemies, and gratify the devil? I tell you with shame and grief of heart, that abundance of weak, unsettled professors, that we hope have upright meanings in the main, have been

more powerful instruments for satan to do his work by, for the hindering of the Gospel, the vilifying of the ministry, the dividing of the church, and the hindering of reformation, than most of the notoriously profane have been! What excellent hopes had we once in England, of the flourishing of piety and happy union among the churches and servants of Christ. And who hath not only frustrated these hopes, but almost broke them all to pieces? Have any had more to do in it, than weak, unstable professors of religiousness? What sad confusion are most parts of England in at this day, by reason of the breaking of the churches into sects and shreds, and the contentions and reproaches of Christians against Christians, and the odious abuse of holy truth and ordinances! And who is it that doth this, so much as unstable professors of piety? What greater reproach almost could have befallen us, than for the adversary to stand by, and see men pulling at each others throats; and hating, and persecuting, and reproaching one another; and that our own hands should pull down the house of God, and tear in pieces the miserable churches, while men are striving who shall be the master of the reformation. O what a sport is this to the devil, when he can set his professed enemies by the ears, and make them fall upon one another. When, if he have any notable work to do against the church and cause of Christ, he can call out unstable Christians to do it! If he would have godliness be scandalized, who hath he to do it but professors of godliness? Some of them to give the scandal, and others to aggravate and divulge it. Would he have a church divided? How quickly doth he find a bone of contention. And who should do it but the unstable members of it? Would he have the truth opposed, and error and darkness to be promoted? Who must do it but professors of the truth? Persuade some of them that truth is error, and error is truth, and the work will be done. They will furiously march out against their Master, and think they do him service while they are fighting against him, and scorning, and shaming, if not killing his servants. Would he have public divisions maintained among all the churches of the world? It is but possessing the weaker, unstable pastors and people, with a perverse zeal for mere words and notions, as if the life of the church did therein consist; and they will be the devil's instruments at a beck, and carry it

perhaps by the major vote ; and all that will not word it as they, shall be called heretics, and the church shall have new articles added to their faith, under pretence of preserving and expounding the old ones. And thus when satan hath a work to do, if heathens and infidels cannot do it, it is no more but call out Christians to do it. If drunkards and malignant enemies cannot do it, it is but calling out some unstable professors of godliness to do it, and possessing the more injudicious part of the pastors with some carnal ends, or blind consuming zeal.

O Christians ! in the name of God, as you would avoid these devilish employments, labour for confirming, strengthening grace, and rest not in your childish weakness, and instability. If you are delivered from satan, and have truly renounced him, and tasted the great salvation of Christ, methinks you should even tremble to consider what a thing it would be, if after all this, you should prove, through your weakness, so serviceable to the devil, and so injurious to your dearest Lord ? What ! must those abuse him whom he hath redeemed from damnation ? Must those hands be employed to demolish his kingdom, that were washed by him, and should have built it up ? As if you were like Judas, that even now hath his hand with his Master in the dish, and presently lifts it up against him !

11. Moreover, while you are weaklings and unconfirmed, you will exceedingly encourage the ungodly in their false hopes, by being so like them as you are. When they see that you excel them so little, and in many things are as bad or worse than they, it strongly persuadeth them that their state is as good as yours, and that they may be saved as well as others, seeing the difference seemeth to be so small. They know that heaven and hell are much unlike, and vastly distant ; and, therefore, they will hardly believe that they must be thrust into hell, when men that seem so little to differ from them must go to heaven. You would not believe how it hardeneth them in their sin, when they see professors do as bad ! And how it settleteth them in presumption and impenitence to perceive your faults ! When a minister hath laboured to make the sins of the ungodly odious to him, and to break his heart with the terrors of the Lord, O how it quieteth him, and healeth all again, to see the like sins, or others as bad, in the professors of religion !

‘ If these,’ saith he, ‘ may be saved, for all such and such sins, what cause have I to fear ?’ O wretched, unprofitable, scandalous professor ! When we have studied and preached for men’s conversion many a year, you go and undo all that we have done, by the scandal, or levity, or imprudence of an hour ! When we have almost persuaded men to be Christians, you unpersuade them, and turn them back again, and do more harm by the weakness and scandal of your lives, than many of us can do good by life and doctrine. When we have brought sinners even to the door of life, you prove their enemies, and take them out of our hands again, and bring them back to their old captivity, doth it not pierce your very hearts to think on it, that ever one soul, much more so many, should be shut out of glory, and burn in everlasting misery, and you should have a hand in it ? Consider of this, and methinks you should desire confirming grace.

12. And methinks it should be very grievous to you, to be so like to the ungodly yourselves, and that satan should still have so much interest in you. Holiness is God’s image ; and doth it not grieve you that you are so little like him ! By his grace he keeps possession of you ; and doth it not grieve you that God hath no more possession of you ; but that satan and sin should so defraud him of his own ! Will he condescend to dwell in so low a worm, so oft defiled with the dung of his iniquities ; and doth it not wound you to think, that even there he should be so straitened, and thrust into corners, by a hellish enemy, as if that simple habitation were too much for him, and that dirty dwelling were too good for him ! And as if you grudged him so much of the leavings of satan, that had taken up the beginning of your days in sin !

Your corruption is the very image of the devil, and doth it not affright you to think that you should be so like him ! You are charged not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed or metamorphosed “ by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, that acceptable, that perfect will of God ;” Rom. xii. 2. And yet will you stop in a state so like to those that perish ? He that hath the least measure of saving grace, is likest to the children of the devil of any man in the world, that is not one of them. Seek, therefore, to increase.

13. And I beseech you consider, that your excellency, and the glory and lustre of your graces, is one of God's appointed means for the honour of his Son, and Gospel, and church, and for the conviction and conversion of the unbelieving world. And, therefore, if you use not these means, you rob God and the church of that which is their due, and deprive sinners of one of the means of their salvation. You are commanded to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven;" Mat. v. 16. Christians, be awakened in the name of God, to consider what you have to do with your graces! You have the living God to please and honour by them! As the excellency of the work doth honour the workman, so must your graces and lives honour God. You have the souls of the weak to confirm by your lives, and the souls of the ungodly to win by your lives. You should all be preachers, and even preach as you go up and down in the world, as a candle lighteth which way ever it goeth. As we are sent to save sinners, as ambassadors of Christ, by public proclamation of his will; so are you sent to save them as his servants and our helpers, and must preach by your lives and familiar exhortations, as we must do by authoritative instruction. A good life is a good sermon; yea, those may be won by your sermons, that will not come to ours; or will not obey the doctrine which they hear. Even to women, that must keep silence in the church, doth Peter command this way of preaching; "That if any of them have husbands that obey not the word, they may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives;" 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. Thousands can understand the meaning of a good life, that cannot understand the meaning of a good sermon! By this way you may preach to men of all languages, though your tongues had never learnt but one. For a holy, harmless, humble life, doth speak in all the languages of the world, to men that have eyes to read it. This is the universal character and language, in which all sorts may perceive you speak the wondrous works of the Holy Ghost. I charge you, therefore, Christians, deprive not God of the honour you owe him, nor the church, or souls of wicked men, of this excellent, powerful help which you owe them, by continuing in your weakness, and unsettled minds, and spotted lives; but grow up to that measure that may be

fit for such a work. As you durst not silence the preachers of the Gospel, so do not dare to silence yourselves from preaching by your holy exemplary lives. And alas, do you think that feeble, giddy, scandalous professors, are like to do any great matters by their lives? Would you wish the poor world to write after such a crooked and blotted copy? Will it win men's hearts to a love of holiness, to talk with a Christian that can scarce speak a word of sense for his religion? Or to see a professor as greedy for a little gain as the veriest worldling that hath no other hope? Or to hear them rail, or lie, or slander? Or to see them turn up and down like a weathercock, according as the wind of temptation sits: and to follow every new opinion that is but put off with a plausible fervency? Do you think that men are like to be won by such lives as these?

14. Do you consider what great things you must make account to suffer for Christ? You must "forsake all that you have;" Luke xiv. 33. You must not save your lives if he bid you lose them; Matt. xvi. 25. You "must suffer with him, if you will be glorified with him;" Rom. viii. 17. You may be called to "confess Christ before the kings or judges" of the earth; and then, "if you deny him, he will deny you," and if you be "ashamed of him he will be ashamed of you," (unless you be brought to a better state); Luke ix. 26. Mark viii. 38. You may be called to "the fiery trial," and "to suffer also the spoiling of your goods;" and in a word, the loss of all. And do you think that you shall not find use for the strongest graces then? Have you not need to be confirmed, rooted Christians, that must expect such storms? Are infants meet for such encounters? Have you not seen how many that seemed strong, have been overthrown in a time of trial? And yet will you stop in a weak estate? Perhaps you will say, 'We cannot stand by our own strength, and, therefore, Christ may uphold the weakest, when the strongest may fall.' To which I answer, it is true; but it is God's common way to work by means, and to imitate nature in his works of grace; and, therefore, he useth to root and strengthen those that he will have to stand and conquer; yea, and to arm them as well as strengthen them, and then to teach them to use their arms. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power

of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand;" Ephes. vi. 10—13. You must look "when you are illuminated, to endure a great fight of afflictions; to be made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and to be companions of them that are so used; and, therefore, you have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, you may receive the promise;" Heb. x. 32, 33. 36. If you will endure, in the time of persecution, the word must take deep root in your hearts; Matt. xiii. 5. 20, 21. and you must be founded on a rock, if you look to stand in time of storms; Matt. vii. 24, 25.

In the mean time, it is a fearful thing to see in what a wavering condition you seem to stand, like a tree that shakes, as if it were even falling, or like a cowardly army, that are ready to run before they fight; and like cowardly soldiers, you are still looking behind you, and a small matter troubleth, and perplexeth, and staggereth you, as if you were ready to repent of your repentings. And must God have such servants as these, that upon every rumour, or word, or trouble, are wavering or looking back, and ready to forsake him?

15. Consider also, that the same reasons that moved you at first to be Christians, should now move you to be confirmed, thriving Christians. For they are of force as well for this, as for that. You would not have missed your part in Christ for all the world, if indeed you have the least degree of grace. And if the beginning be good and necessary, the increase is neither bad or needless. If a little grace be desirable, sure more is more desirable. If it was then but a reasonable thing that you should forsake all for Christ and follow him, it is sure as reasonable that you should follow him to the end, till you reach that blessedness which was the end for which at first you followed him. What! Christian, hast thou found God a hard master, a barren wilderness to thee? or his service an unprofitable thing? Say so, and I dare say thou art a bastard (to use the apostle's phrase, Heb. xii. 8.), and not a Christian. Some trial thou hast

made of him. What evil hast thou found in him? or what wrong hath he ever done thee, that thou shouldst now begin to make a stand, as if thou wert in doubt, whether it be best to go further? If ever Christ were needful, he is needful still. And if ever heaven and holiness were good, they are good still. And, therefore, go on till thou hast obtained more, and forget not the reasons that first persuaded with thee.

16. Nay, more than so, you have the addition of much experience, which should be an exceeding help to quicken your affections. When you first repented and came in to Christ, you had never had any experience in yourselves of his saving, special grace before; but you came in upon the bare hearing and believing of it. But now you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and you have received at his hands the pardon of sin, the Spirit of adoption, the hope of glory, which before you had not! You have had many a prayer answered, and many a deliverance granted; and will you make a stand when all these experiences do call you forward? Should not new motives and helps thus added to the old, be the means of adding to your zeal and holiness? Surely more wages and encouragement, doth bespeak more work and diligence. And, therefore, see that you increase.

17. And most, or many of you have cause to consider how long you have been in the family and school of Christ. If you are but newly entered, I may well exhort you to increase, but I cannot reprove you for not increasing. But, alas! what a multitude of dwarfs hath Christ, that are like infants at twenty, or forty, or threescore years of age. What! be so many years in his school, and yet be in the lowest form. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, that by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;" Heb. v. 12—14. O poor weak, diseased Christian! hast thou been so many years beholding the face of God by faith, and yet art thou no more in love with him than at the first? Hast thou been so long in making trial of his goodness? And dost thou see it, and savour it no more than in the beginning? Hast

thou been so long under his cure, and art thou no more healed than the first year or day? Hast thou been hearing and talking of heaven so long, and yet art thou no more heavenly nor ready for heaven? Hast thou heard and talked so much against the world and the flesh, and yet is the world as high in thee as at first, and the flesh as strong as in the beginning of thy profession? O what a sin and shame is this! And what a wrong to God and thee!

Yea, consider here also, what means thou hast had, as well as what time! O who hath gone beyond thee for power, and plenty, and purity of ordinances! Or at least how few! Surely few parts of all the earth are like to England, for the showers of heaven, and the riches of the precious ordinances of God. You have sermons till you can scarce desire more! And that so plain, that men can scarce tell how to speak plainer; and so earnest, as if the servants of Christ would take no nay; even almost as if they must perish if you perished. You have as frequent, as plain, as powerful books. You have the warnings and examples of the godly about you. And what yet would you have more? And should a people thus fed be dwarfs continually? Is ignorance, and dullness, and earthliness, and selfishness excusable after all these means? Surely, sirs, it is but just that God should expect you all to be giants! Even heavenly, grown, confirmed Christians. Whatever others do, it should be so with you.

18. And methinks it should somewhat move you to consider how others have thriven in less time, and by smaller means by far than you have had! And how some of your neighbours can yet thrive by the same means that you so little thrive by. Job, that was so magnified by God himself, had not such means as you. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, had none of them all such means as you! "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them;" Matt. xiii. 17. Though John the Baptist was greater than any of the prophets, yet the least of you that are in the Gospel kingdom, are greater than he in respect of means. As the times of the Gospel have far clearer light, and give out greater measures of grace, so the true genuine children of the Gos-

pel should (taking them one with another) be far more confirmed, strong, and heavenly, than those that were under the darker and scantier administrations of the promise.

And do you not see and hear how far you are outstripped by many of your poor neighbours, that are as low in natural parts, and as low in the world, and the esteem of men as you. How many (in this place I dare boldly speak it) do shine before you in knowledge, and meekness, and patience, and a blameless, upright life : in fervent prayers, and a heavenly conversation ! Men that have had as much need to look after the world as you, and no longer time to get these qualifications ; and no other means but what you have had, or might have had, as well as they. And now they shine as stars in the church on earth, while you are like sparks, if not like clods. I know that God is the free disposer of his graces ; but yet he so seldom faileth any (even in degrees) that be not wanting to themselves, that I may well ask you, why you might not have reached to some more eminency, as well as these about you, if you had but been as careful and industrious as they.

19. Consider also, that your holiness is your personal perfection, and that of the same kind you must have in glory, though not of the same degree. And, therefore, if you be not desirous of its increase, it seems you are out of love with your souls, and with heaven itself. And when you cease to grow in holiness, you cease to go on any further to salvation. If you would, indeed, yourselves, be perfect and blessed, you must be perfected in this holiness, which must make you capable of the perfect fruition of the most holy God, and capable of his perfect love and praise. There is no heaven without a perfection in holiness. If, therefore, you let fall your desires of this, it seems you let fall your desires of salvation. Up then, and be doing, and grow as men that are growing up to glory ; and if you believe that you are in your progress to heaven, being nearer your salvation than when you first believed, see then that you make a progress in heavenly mindedness, and that you be riper for salvation than when you first believed. How ill doth it become men to make any stand in the way to heaven, especially when they have been in the way so long, that we might have expected before this they should have been, as it were, almost within sight of it.

20. Consider also, that little grace, little glory ; and the greater measure of holiness, the greater measure will you have of happiness. I know that the glory of the lowest saint in heaven will be exceedingly great ; but doubtless the greatest measure is unspeakably the most desirable. And as it will not stand with the truth of grace for a man to be satisfied with a low degree of grace, though he plead the happiness of the lowest Christian, and his own unworthiness of the least degree ; so, at least, it ill beseems an heir of glory to desire but the lowest degree of glory, though he plead the happiness of the lowest saint in heaven, and his own unworthiness of the lowest place. For he that will be so content with the smallest glory, as not to have hearty desires of more, is accordingly content to have in himself the smallest measure of the knowledge and love of God, and to be loved in the smallest measure by him ; and to have the least enjoyment of him ; and to bear the smallest part in his praises, and in pleasing and glorifying him for ever. For all these things are our happiness itself. And how well this agreeth with a gracious frame of mind, I need not any further tell you.

But because some make question of it, whether the degree of glory will be answerable to the degree of holiness, I shall prove it in a few words.

(1.) It is the very drift of the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv. He that had gotten most by improvement, was made ruler proportionably over most cities. Not he that had been at the greatest bodily labour in religion, nor every one that had passed the greatest sufferings ; but he that had got most holiness to himself, and honour to God by the improvement of his talents, and so had doubled them.

(2.) The degrees of holiness hereafter will be divers, as are the degrees of holiness here ; for as men sow, they will reap ; and there is no promise in Scripture, that men that die with the smallest holiness shall be made equal to them that died with the greatest holiness. And that the greatest holiness hereafter, must have the greatest happiness, is past denial. For, [1.] Holiness in heaven is an essential part of the felicity itself. It is the perfection of the soul. [2.] The use of it is for perfect fruition, and perfect exercise of love and praise ; which are the other parts of glory. And God will not give men powers, capacities, and dispositions in hea-

ven which shall be in vain; as he giveth hungering, and thirsting, and love, so will he give proportionable satisfaction, and not tantalize his servants in their blessedness, and leave a part of hell in heaven. [3.] And holiness is pleasing to God in its own nature; and, therefore, the greatest holiness will most greatly please him; and he that most pleaseth God, hath the greatest glory. These things are plain.

(3.) Moreover, we have great reason to conceive of the state of the glorified, in some congruency with the rest of the workmanship of God. But in all the rest there is a difference or imparity; therefore we have reason to think it is so here. On earth there are princes and subjects in the commonwealth; and pastors and people in the churches, and several degrees among the people as to gifts and comforts. Among the devils there are degrees; and among the angels themselves there are principalities and powers, and thrones and dominions. And why then should we imagine that the heavenly Jerusalem shall not be so too?

(4.) And Christ plainly intimateth that there is a place, "on his right hand, and on his left, to give," in that kingdom, though, as the Son of Man, he had not the principal disposal of it. (And then the kingdom must be delivered to the Father, and God be all in all; and, therefore, the Mediator as such have somewhat less to do, than now.) And when Christ telleth us of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and of many from the east and west sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he intimateth to us, that every place in heaven is not so high as Abraham's bosom, nor a sitting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So that I take it as a plain revealed truth, that divers degrees of holiness will have divers degrees of glory hereafter.

The chief argument to the contrary is fetched from the parable of the labourers, that coming in at several hours, received every one a penny. But this is misunderstood. For here is not a word in it contrary to our assertion. The parable only saith that, 'Glory shall not be proportioned to the time, but they that come later shall have never the less for that,' which is nothing to our question about the degrees of holiness. For many that are first in time may be least and last in holiness; and many that are last in time, may in that little time come to be best and greatest in holiness, and consequently in glory. The parable in Matt. xxv. shews that

God will give different degrees of glory, according to the difference in improvement of our talents. And the other parable shews that he will not give out his glory according to men's time and standing in the church, seeing a weaker Christian may be of longer standing, and a stronger of a later coming in. And what shew of discord is there between these? 2. And yet it is doubtful in the judgment of good expositors, whether the parable of the penny do speak of heaven at all or not; and whether it speak not only of the vocation of the Gentiles, and taking them into the Gospel church in equality with the believing Jews: though the Jews being God's ancient people, had been longer in the vineyard, and the Gentiles were called but at the eleventh hour, yet God will make the Gentiles equal in the grace of vocation, because in this he hath not engaged himself, but may do with his own as he list. Whichever of these two is the thing intended in the text, or possibly both, it is certain that this general is the sum of the parable, That the first may be last, and the last first; that is, that God will not give men the greatest reward that were first called. But he never said that he would not reward them most, that had done him the truest service, and were highest in holiness.

Object. But the reason is, 'May I not do as I will with my own.' True, but you must remember what it is a reason of; even of the cause in question, and may not by you be extended to other causes without a warrant. You never read that he equally pardoneth the believer and the unbeliever, or saveth the regenerate and the unregenerate, and then gives this reason of it, 'May I not do as I will with my own.' For this can be no reason for any thing which he hath revealed that he will do. Prove first that he will not do it, and then bring your reasons why; but not before. So that it extendeth not to the case of different glory upon different degrees of holiness; for this he hath revealed that he will do.

So much (and perhaps too much) to satisfy the doubtful. Now I desire to return to the dull and languishing Christian, and beseech him to remember what a difference there will be between one saint and another in glory! And O who would not aspire after the highest measure of holiness, in hope of a high degree of glory? Christian, hadst thou not infinitely rather love God with the greatest love than with a

less, and be beloved, again with the greatest of his love? I mean, by partaking of the greatest effects of it, and the fullest sense of his everlasting favour. Remember this, and sure it will persuade thee to gird up thy loins, and run as for the incorruptible crown, and press on to the mark for the price of the high calling, and not to sit down with weak beginnings, especially when the way is so sweet as well as the end; and the greatest holiness hath here also the greatest spiritual reward; and is attended with the greatest peace and joy (in the ordinary course of God's dispensations). And when all the knocks, and falls, and cries of Christians in this life, proceed from the childish weakness of their spirits: and almost all the woes and calamities that attend us, our shames, our pains, our contentions and divisions, and the lamentable difficulty (that seems an impossibility) of healing them, or preventing more, all is from the corruptions that are the companions of our weakness. And could we but grow up to a manhood of understanding, humility, meekness, self-denial, and the love of God in Christ, and of one another, we might then have some hope of the cure of all. Alas! that men that are so sensible of the difference between a weak body and a strong, a sick and a sound, a child and a man, an idiot and a man of wisdom, though all of them have human nature, should yet be so little sensible of the great difference between a weak Christian and a strong, a sick and a sound (comparatively sound), a childish and a manly, wise, confirmed Christian! Did you well know the difference, you would shew us that you make a greater matter of it.

And now, Christian reader, I entreat thee soberly to consider of these twenty motives, whether they do not shew thee reason enough to move thee to look after higher things, and not to stay in an infancy of holiness. It is a blessed mercy I confess, that God hath given thee a true conversion, and the smallest measure of the heavenly life. I do not move thee to undervalue it. Nay, I am blaming thee for undervaluing it. For if thou didst not undervalue it, thou wouldst earnestly desire more. Thou hast cause to bless God to all eternity, and to all eternity thou shalt bless him, for making thee a new creature, even a living member of his Son. And I know that thy condition is unspeakably better than the greatest prince's or emperor's upon the earth, that is void of

holiness. I know that thou hast still ground of exceeding consolation. I am not taking thy comforts from thee. I know God despiseth not the day of small things: and that Christ will not “quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,” nor cast off the poorest infants of his family, or lose any one of the lambs of his flock. But yet for all this I must tell thee, that there is a great deal of difference in excellency, and strength, and comfort, and happiness, between one sanctified person and another. And if thou be so apt to be over-covetous of worldly riches, where God forbiddeth it, and limiteth thy desires, and where there is no such necessity or excellency to entice thee, why shouldst thou not cherish that holy covetousness which God expressly commandeth thee? “Covet earnestly the best gifts;” and which he hath promised a blessing to. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;” Matt. v. 6. This is not spoken of them that have no righteousness, but of them that have it, and fain would have more. For 1. There is no such promise made to any that are short of saving faith. It is not any common grace that God makes this promise to, but a special grace. And 2. It is evident that no man can thus hunger and thirst after righteousness without righteousness; for even this hungering and thirsting is a degree of true sanctification. You would not take up with a cottage or smoky cabin if you could have a palace; nor with dry bread if you could lawfully have plenty; nor with a torn or threadbare coat, if you could have better; nor with a poor, laborious, toilsome life, in disgrace, and the reproach of men, if you could have honour, and ease, and abundance. And yet will you take up with so poor a stock of holiness, and so dark a mind, and small a measure of heavenly light, and so cold a love to God and glory, and so barren and common a kind of life? God hath commanded you, “That having food and raiment, you should therewith be content;” but he never commanded you that being once converted and made an infant in grace, you should therewith be content. So content you must be as not to murmur; but not so content as not to desire more.

You can see the difference, I doubt not, in others, between a little grace and more: O that you would but see this for yourselves! If you have a froward wife, or husband,

or child, that hath a harsh and passionate nature, and hath so much grace only as to lament this when they are calmed, and to strive against it, but not to forbear the often exercise of it; though such a nature may be pardoned to the penitent, yet it may prove such a thorn in your own side, and such a smoke or continual dropping in your house, as will make you weary of it. I have oft known men that had wives of so much folly, and passion, and unruliness of tongue, that yet they hoped had some saving grace, that made them weary of their lives, and wish that they had met with a gentle nature. And methinks you should know that corruption in yourselves is much more dangerous and hurtful to you than any that can be in wife or husband; and should be much more offensive, and wearisome, and grievous to you. It is a desperate sign of a bad heart, that can bear with corruption in themselves, and cannot bear with it in wife or husband, or those that do them wrong by their corruptions. If weakness of grace do leave your nearest friends thus liable to wrong and abuse you, and this trouble you; consider that your own weakness leaves you liable to far greater and oftener offences against God, and this should trouble you much more.

Let me give you another instance: if you have a pastor that is truly godly, and yet is so weak that he can scarce speak with any understanding or life the message that he should deliver, and withal is indiscreet, and as scandalous as will stand with grace; what good is this man like to do for all his godliness? At least you will soon see a lamentable difference between such an one and a judicious, convincing, holy, heavenly, powerful, and unspotted man. O what a blessing is one to the place, and the other may be a grievous judgment, and you would be ready to run away from his ministry. Why, sirs, if there be so great a difference between pastor and pastor, where both have grace, methinks you should see what a difference there is also between people and people, even where all have grace. For truly poor ministers find this to their sorrow in their people, as well as you can find it in them. Some ministers have a staid, confirmed, judicious, humble, meek, self-denying, teachable, peaceable, and experienced people: and these walk comfortably, and guide them peaceably, and labour with them cheerfully; and O what beauty and glory is upon

such assemblies, and what order, and growth, and comfort is among them! But, alas! how many ministers have a flock (even of those that we hope are godly) that grieve them by their levity, or weary them by their unteachable ignorance or self-conceitedness, or hinder their labours by errors and quarrels, and perverse opposition to the truths which they do not understand? So that there is a great difference between people and people that are godly.

Brethren, it is far from the desire of my heart, to cast any unjust dishonour upon saints, much less to dishonour the graces of God in them. No, I take it rather for an honour to that immortal spark, that it can live among its enemies and not be conquered, and in the waters of corruption, and not be quenched. But yet I must take up a just complaint, that few of us answer the cost of our redemption and the provisions of God; or are near such a people as our receivings or professions require we should be. It is one of the most grievous thoughts that ever came to my heart, to observe how the lives of the greatest part of professors do tend to dishonour the power and worth of grace in the eyes of the world, and that the ungodly should see that grace doth make no greater a difference, and do no more upon us than it doth. Yea, it is a sore temptation oftentimes to believers, to see that grace doth no more in the most; but that so many are still a shame to their profession.

I must confess that I once thought more highly of professors as to the measure of their grace, than experience now will suffer me to think. Little did I think that they had been so unstable, so light, so ignorant, so giddy, as to follow almost any that do but whistle them. What a dreadful sight it is to see, how quickly the most odious heresies do infect and destroy even multitudes of them, and that in a moment, as soon as they appear! The grossest mists of the bottomless pit are presently admired as the light of God.

If a church-divider do but arise, how quickly doth he get disciples.

If a Papist have but opportunity, he will lightly catch some as oft as he doth cast his net. If he cannot prevail barefaced, it is but putting on the visor of some other sect.

Even the odious heresies of the Quakers themselves, and their railings, which an honest pagan would abhor, do presently find entertainment with professors; and let the matter

or manner be never so senseless, yet is it accepted if it be but zealously put off. O who would have thought that our people that seemed godly should be so greedy of the devil's baits as to catch at any thing, yea, and to devour the bare hooks! O who would have thought that so many that seemed lovers of God, would so readily believe every deceiver that speaks against him, if he can but do it with a pious pretence.

Yea, if Seekers themselves do but cast in their objections, how many of our people are presently at a loss, and their faith is muddled, and they are to seek for a ministry, and to seek for a church, and to seek for ordinances, and to seek for a Scripture, even for the Gospel itself; and therefore it is like they are to seek for a Christ, or to seek for a religion, if not to seek for God, and for a heaven.

O sad day! that ever these things should come to pass, and that we are forced to utter them, having no possibility of concealing them from the world. Were these men confirmed and stablished in the faith? Were these men rooted and built up in Christ? Alas, sirs, if any deceivers come among us, how few of our people are able to withstand them, and defend the truth of God against them! But they are caught up by the devil's falconer, as the poor chickens by the kite, except those that fly under the wings of a judicious, settled minister.

If an Anabaptist assault their baptism, how few of them can defend it. And, silly souls, when they find themselves nonplused, they suspect not their own unfurnished understandings, or inexperienced, unsettled hearts, but suspect the truth of God, and suspect their teachers, be they never so far beyond them in knowledge and holiness; as if their teachers had misled them, whenever these unprofitable infants are thus stalled.

If a Papist be to plead his cause with them, how few have we that can answer them!

If an infidel should oppose the Scripture, or Christ himself, how few among us are able to defend them, and solidly give proof either of the truth of Scripture, or of the faith that they do profess!

And this is not all (though it is a heart-breaking case) but even in their practice, alas! what remissness and what corruptions do appear! How few in secret do keep any

constant watch upon their hearts, and fear and abhor the approach of an evil thought ! Nay, how few are they that do not leave their fancy almost common, and ordinarily even feed on covetous, proud, malicious, or lustful thoughts, and make no great matter of it, but live in it from day to day ! How few do keep up life and constancy in secret prayer or meditation ! How few are the families where the cause, and worship, and government of Christ are kept up in life and honour, and where all is not dissolved into a little weary, disordered, heartless performance !

Look into our congregations, and judge but by their very looks, and carriage, and gestures, how many even of those that we think the best, do so much as seem to be earnest and serious in prayer and praise, when the church is upon that work ! Though it be the highest and noblest part of worship, and should be done with all the heart and might, and with a participation of a kind of angelical reverence, devotion and spirituality ; and if it were so, we should see it by some of the signs of reverence and affection : yet, alas ! when we think the best of them should be striving with God, or rapt up in his praises, they do but hear us pray as they hear us preach, and think they have done fair to give us the hearing. They sit on their seats in prayer, or use some crooked, leaning gesture, perhaps looking up and down about them, perhaps half asleep ; but few of them with eyes, and hands, and hearts lifted up to heaven, do behave themselves as if they believed that they had so nearly to do with God. I know reverent gestures may easily be counterfeited ; but that shews that they are good, when hypocrites think them a fit cover for hypocrisy, for they use not to borrow credit from evil, but from some good to be a cover to the evil : and it leaveth the neglects of the godly more inexcusable, when they will not go so far herein as hypocrites themselves, nor by their behaviour in a public ordinance, so much as seem to be seriously employed with God.

And if we try the graces or obedience of professors, alas, how small shall we find them in the most ! How little are most acquainted with the life of faith ! How little do they admire the Redeemer and his blessed work ! How unacquainted are they with the daily use and high improvement of a Saviour, for access to God, and support and corroboration of the soul, and for conveyance of daily supplies of

grace, and help against our spiritual enemies ! How few are they that can rejoice in tribulation, persecution, and bodily distresses, because of the hopes laid up in heaven ; and that can live upon a promise, and comfortably wait on God for the accomplishment ! How few that live as men that are content with God alone, and can cheerfully leave their flesh, and credit, and worldly estate to his disposal, and be content to want or suffer when he sees it good for them ! What repinings and troubles possess our minds if the flesh be not provided for, and if God do but cross us in these worldly things ; as if we had made our bargain with him for the flesh, and for this world, and had not taken him alone for our portion ? How few can use prosperity in riches, and health and reputation, with a mortified, weaned, heavenly mind ! Nay, how few are there that do not live much to the pleasure of the flesh, and pamper it as indulgently under the appearance of temperance and religion, as others do in grosser ways ! Do but try the godly themselves by plain and faithful reproof of their corruptions, and see how many of them you will find, that will not excuse them and take part with the enemy, and be offended with you for your close reproof. If any of them be overtaken with a scandalous fault, and the pastors of the church shall call them to open confession, and expression of repentance, though you would little think a penitent man should once stick at this, and refuse to do any thing that he can do, to repair the honour of God and his profession, and to save the souls of others whom he hath endangered, yet how many will you find, that will add a wilful obstinacy to their scandal, and will deliberately refuse so great, and clear, and necessary a duty : so great is the interest of self and flesh in them, and consequently so little of Christ, that they will live in impenitency in the eye of the church, and venture on the high displeasure of God, come on it what will, and resist the advice of their best, and wisest, and most impartial friends, rather than they will so far deny themselves as to make such a free and faithful confession. They are many of them so much for holy discipline, that they are ready to fall out with church and ministers, and to be gone to a purer society, because it is not exercised : but on whom ? On others only, and not upon them. When they need discipline themselves, how impatient are they of it, and how do they abhor it, and

what a stir do they make before they will submit ; even more sometimes than a drunkard or a swearer ; so small is their repentance and detestation of their sin ; whereby they shew that their zeal for discipline and reformation, is much out of pride, that others may be brought to stoop, or be cast out from them ; and not out of a sincere desire to have the refining and humbling benefit of it themselves.

And if any among them be either faulty or reported so to be, who is forwarder than many professors of godliness, to backbite them, and speak of their faults when they cannot hear, nor answer for themselves, nor receive any benefit by it ; and if another that hates backbiting, do but reprove them, they will slander him also for a defender of men's sin ! But when they should go in Christ's way, and tell men of their faults, and draw them to repentance, and if they hear not, take two or three, and speak to them again, how hardly can you draw them to the performance of this duty, what shifts and frivolous excuses have they then ! Nay, they will reproach the church or minister for not casting such out, or not keeping them from communion, before they have done, or will be persuaded to do these duties that must go before.

Alas, how little hearty love is there to Christ in his members, even in them that are confident they love the brethren ! How few will do or suffer much for them, or relieve them in their want, as suffering with them ! How small a matter, a word, a seeming wrong or disrespect, will turn their love into estrangedness or bitterness ; if they be tried by an ill word, or a wrong, how touchy, and froward, and impatient do they appear ; and it is well if they prove not downright malicious, or return not reviling for reviling.

Alas, how much pride prevaieth with many that seem to go far in the way of piety ! How wise are they in their own conceits ! How able to judge of controversies, and how much wiser than their teachers, before they can give a good account of the catechism or fundamental truths ! How well do they think of themselves and their own parts and performances ; how ill do they bear disesteem or undervaluing ; and they must needs be noted for somebody in the world !

How worldly, and closehanded, and eager of gain, are many that say they despise the world, and take it for their enemy ; if any duty be cross to their profit or credit with men, how obstinate are they against it ; and such interest

hath the flesh in them, that they will hardly believe that it is their duty.

How censorious are they of others, especially that differ from them in lesser things ; and how unapt to judge themselves. O how few are the Christians that are eminent in humility, meekness, and self-denial ; that are content to be accounted nothing, so that Christ may be all, and his honour may be secured ; that live as men devoted to God, and honour him with their substance, and freely expend, yea, study for advantages, to improve all their riches and interest to his service. How few are they that live as in heaven upon earth, with the world under their feet, and their hearts above with God their happiness ; that feel themselves to live in the workings and warmth of love to God, and make him their delight, and are content with his approbation whoever disapproveth them ; that are still groaning, or reaching and seeking after him, and long to be with him, to be rid of sin, and see his blessed face, and live in his perfect love and praises ; that love and long for the appearance of Jesus Christ, and can heartily say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." How few are they that stand in a day of trial ; if they are tried but with a foul word ; if tried but with any thing that toucheth their commodity ; if tried but with the emptiest reasonings of deceivers ; much more if they be tried with the honours and greatness of the world, how few of them stand in trial, and do not fail and forget themselves, as if they were not the men that they seemed to be before ! What then would they prove if they were tried by the flames ?

Mistake me not in all this sad complaint ; as I intend not the dishonour of godliness by this, but of ungodliness, (for it is not because men are godly that they have these faults, but because they are not godly more.) So here is no encouragement to the unsanctified to think themselves as good as the more religious, because they are charged with so many faults. Nor do I affirm all these things to be consistent with true grace that I have here expressed ; but only this, that professors that seem godly to others, are thus too many of them guilty ; and those that have true grace may have any of these faults in a mortified degree, though not in a reigning, predominant measure.

But methinks sirs, you should by this time be convinced

and sensible, how much we dishonour God by our infirmities ; and what a lamentable case it is that the church should consist of so many infants ; and so many should be so little serviceable to God or the common good, but rather be troublers of all about them. Alas, that we should reach no higher, that yet no greater things should be attained ! O what an honour would you be to your profession, and what a blessing to the church, if you did but answer the cost and pains of God and man, and answer the high things that you have been acquainted with and profess. O that we could but boast of you as God did of Job, and could say to satan or any of his instruments, ‘ Here be Christians rooted and stablished in the faith ; try whether you can shake them or make them stagger, and do your worst. Here is a man eminent in meekness, and humility, and patience, and self-denial ; discompose and disturb his mind if you can ; draw him to pride, or immoderate passion, or censoriousness, or uncharitableness if you can. Here are a people that are in unity, and knit together in faith and love ; of one heart, and one soul, and one lip ; do your worst to divide them, or break them into parties, or draw them into several minds and ways, or exasperate them against each other. Here are a people established in mortification, and that have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts ; do your worst to draw them to intemperance in eating, or drinking, or recreations, or any of the delights of the flesh ; or to puff them up by greatness or prosperity, and make them forget themselves or God. Try them with riches, or beauty, or vain-glory, or other sensual delights, and see whether they will turn aside, and be ever the less in communion with God, and enticed to forget the joy that is set before them, or will not rather despise your baits, and run away from alluring objects as their greatest dangers. Daunt them if you can by threatenings ; try them by persecution, by fire and sword, and see whether they are not past your shaking, even rooted, confirmed, and built up in Christ.’

O what a glory would you be to your profession, if you could attain to this degree ; could we but truly thus boast of you, we might say our people are Christians of the right strain. But when we must come about you like men in a swoon, and can hardly perceive whether you are alive or dead, and can scarce discern whether you have any grace or

none, what a grief is this to our hearts ; what a perplexity to us in our administrations, not knowing whether comfort or terror be your due : and what a languishing, uncomfortable life is this to yourselves, in comparison of what you might attain to !

Rouse up yourselves, Christians, and look after higher and greater things ; and think it not enough that you are barely alive. It is an exceeding righteousness that you must have if you will be saved, even exceeding all that the unsanctified do attain ; for, “ Except your righteousness exceed even the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven ;” Matt. v. 20. But it is yet a more exceeding righteousness, that you must have if you will be confirmed, built up and abound, and would honour your profession, and cheerfully, successfully, and constantly go on in the journey, the race, the warfare that you have begun : you must then exceed yourselves, and exceed all the feeble, unstable, wavering, infant Christians that are about you : and to persuade you yet further to look after this, I shall here annex a few Motives more.

1. Consider Christian, that it is a God of exceeding, infinite greatness and goodness that thou hast to do with, and therefore it is not small and low matters that are suitable to his service. O if thou hadst but a glimpse of his glory, thou wouldst say that it is not common things that are meet for such a dreadful majesty. Hadst thou but a fuller taste of his goodness, thy heart would say, this pittance of love and service is unworthy of him. You will not offer the basest things to a king, much less to the highest King of kings. “ If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? offer it now to thy governor ; will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts ?” Mal. i. 8. “ But ye have profaned it (his great name) in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, his meat is contemptible : ye have said also, what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts, and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame and the sick ; thus ye brought an offering. Should I accept this at your hand saith the Lord ? But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing ; for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is

dreadful among the heathen;" verse 12—14. If you better knew the majesty of God, you would know that the best is too little for him, and trifling is not tolerable in his service. When Nadab and Abihu ventured with false fire to his altar, and he smote them dead, he silenced Aaron with this reason of his judgment, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified;" Lev. x. 1—3. That is, 'I will have nothing common offered to me, but be served with my own holy, peculiar service.' When the Bethshemites were smitten dead, fifty thousand threescore and ten men of them, they found that God would not be dallied with, and cried out, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" 1 Sam. vi. 20.

2. Consider also, it was an exceeding great price that was paid for your redemption; for "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ;" 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. It was an exceeding great love that was manifested by God the Father, and by Christ in his work of redemption; such as even poseth angels and men to study it and comprehend it; 1 Pet. i. 12. Eph. iii. 18, 19. And should all this be answered but with trifling from you? Should such a matchless miracle of love be answered with no greater love? Especially when you were purposely "redeemed from all iniquity, that you might be sanctified to Christ a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" Tit. ii. 14. It being therefore so great a price that you are bought with, remember that you are none of your own, but must glorify him that bought you, in body and spirit; 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. Consider also, that it is not a small, but an exceeding glory, that is promised you in the Gospel, and which you live in hope to possess for ever; and therefore it should be an exceeding love that you should have to it, and an exceeding care that you should have of it. Make light of heaven, and make light of all. Truly it is an unsuitable, unreasonable thing, to have one low thought, or one careless word, or one cold prayer or other performance, about such a matter as eternal glory. Shall such a thing as heaven be coldly or carelessly minded and sought after? Shall the endless fruition of God in glory, be looked at with sleepy, heartless wishes? I tell you sirs, if you will have such high

hopes, you must have high and strong endeavours. A slow pace becomes not him that travelleth to such a home as this. If you are resolved for heaven, behave yourselves accordingly. A gracious, reverent, godly frame of spirit, producing an acceptable service of God, is fit for them that look to receive the kingdom that cannot be moved; Heb. xii. 28. The believing thoughts of the end of all our labours, must needs convince us that we should be "steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" 1 Cor. xv. 58. O hearken thou sleepy, slothful Christian! Doth not God call, and conscience call, 'Awake, and up and be doing, man, for it is for heaven!' Hearken thou negligent, lazy Christians; do not God and conscience call out to thee, 'O man, make haste and mend thy pace, it is for heaven!' Hearken thou cowardly faint-hearted Christian; do not God and conscience call out to thee, 'Arm man, and see thou stand thy ground; do not give back, nor look behind thee, but fall on, and fight in the strength of Christ; for it is for the crown of endless glory.' O what a heart hath that man, that will not be heartened with such calls as these. Methinks the very name of God and heaven should awaken you, and make you stir, if there be any stirring power within you. Remissness in worldly matters hath an excuse, for they are but trifles; but slackness in the matters of salvation, is made inexcusable by the greatness of those matters. O let the noble greatness of your hopes appear in the resolvedness, exactness, and diligence of your lives.

4. Consider also, that it is not only low and smaller mercies that you receive from God, but mercies innumerable, and inestimable, and exceeding great. And, therefore, it is not cold affections, and dull endeavours, that you should return to God for all these mercies. Mercy brought you into the world; and mercy hath nourished you and bred you up; and mercy hath defended and maintained you, and plentifully provided for you. Your bodies live upon it: your souls were recovered by it: it gave you your being: it rescued you from misery: it saveth you from sin, and satan, and yourselves. All that you have at the present, you hold by it: all that you can hope for for the future must be from it. It is most sweet in quality. What is sweeter to miserable souls than mercy? It is exceeding great in quantity!

“The mercy of the Lord is in the heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth to the clouds. His righteousness is like the great mountains ; his judgments are the great deep ;” Psal. xxxvi. 5, 6. “O how great is his goodness which he hath laid up for them that fear him ; which he hath for them that trust in him before the sons of men ;” Psal. xxxi. 19. “His mercy is great unto the heavens, and his truth unto the clouds ;” Psal. lvii. 10. And O what an insensible heart hath he that doth not understand the voice of all this wondrous mercy. Doubtless it speaketh the plainest language in the world ; commanding great returns from us of love, and praise, and obedience to the bountiful bestower of them. With David we must say, “Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me marvellous kindness in a strong city : O love the Lord all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth all the faithful ;” Psal. xxxi. 21, 23. “Teach me thy way, O Lord ; I will walk in thy truth. Unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart ; and I will glorify thy name for evermore, for great is thy mercy towards me ; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell :” Psal. lxxxvi. 11—13. Unspeakable mercies must needs be felt in deep impressions, and be so savoury with the gracious soul, that methinks it should work us to the highest resolutions. Unthankfulness is a crime that heathens did detest : and it is exceedingly great unthankfulness, if we have not exceeding great love and obedience, under such exceeding great and many mercies as we possess.

5. Consider, that they are exceeding great helps and means that you possess, to further your holiness and obedience to God : and, therefore, your holiness and obedience should also be exceeding great. You have all the book of nature to instruct you. Every creature may teach you God, and calls loud upon you to persuade your hearts yet nearer to him. Every work of disposing Providence is an instructor and persuader of you. Every leaf and line of Scripture is a guide and spur to you. You have ministers able and willing to help you : you have the help of the communion of saints : the help of the examples of the good : and the warnings of the judgments of God upon the wicked. The helps of sermons ; the helps of sacraments ; the helps of prayer, and holy meditation and conference. Mercies to encourage you ; afflictions to excite you. What more would you have ?

And yet will you be infants, and do no more with all your helps? But this I touched upon before.

6. It is an exceeding great necessity that is upon you. And, therefore, your resolutions should be exceeding high, and your diligence exceeding great. For all you are converted, your salvation lieth yet upon your stability and perseverance. "Christ hath reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight; if you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you have heard;" Col. i. 22, 23. God will not be an acceptor of persons! You must stick to his terms if you will partake of his salvation. He will not make two words with you. He hath told you what he expecteth of you; and that he will have. Death will not be bribed, nor put by. Judgment is coming on. There is no shifting out of the hands of God. And under such pressing necessities as these, what Christians should we be! How stable, and abundant in faith and righteousness!

7. It is a great account that you have to make, and, therefore, a great preparation that should be made. When you shall be brought before the living God, and all your times, and thoughts, and ways, must be called over, and you see what follows, and are waiting for the final doom, then there will be no dull thoughts in your hearts, all will be then lively, and quite above this careless frame. Then even the wicked will have strong desires, 'O that we had taken another course! that we had but prevented this dreadful doom, whatever it had cost us!' And should not believers now be awakened to great and careful preparations, for such a day as this?

8. For trifles here are great endeavours used. To climb up into honour and riches in the world; to satisfy the flesh; to lay up a treasure on earth, and labour for the meat that perisheth. O what endeavours then should be used, for the heavenly, everlasting treasure!

9. Consider also, how forward and diligent should those men be, that are sure they can never go too high, nor be too diligent, when they have done their best. Nay, that are certain, that the best do come so abundantly short, that they must after sit down and lament that they were no better. O there is not the holiest saint on earth, but will confess with

lamentation, how little his love to God is in comparison of what it should be ; how short all falls below our duty, below the glorious majesty of God ; below the precious love of Christ ; below the worth of precious souls ; below the weight of endless glory ; below the mercies that should warm our hearts ; below the great necessity that is on us ; and consequently below their own desires. Look, therefore, after greater things, while you may attain them.

10. Lastly, consider what abundance of great engagements are on you, that are sincere believers, more than upon others.

(1.) You are more nearly related to Christ than any others are. And, therefore, you should be more tender of offending him, and more eminent in love and service to him. You are his household-servants ; and will you not labour for him and stick to him ? You are his friends ; and should a friend abuse him ? should not a friend be faithful ? You are his dear, adopted children, and his spouse ; and should not you be faithful to him to the death ? Should not all the love and service that you have be his ? Isa. i. 2, 3. Mal. i. 10. Gal. v. 4.

(2.) You have bound yourselves to him by more serious frequent vows and covenants than other men have done. How many persons, and places, and necessities of yours, can witness against you, if you be not firm and forward for the Lord. As Joshua said to Israel, “ Behold this stone, it shall be a witness unto you, lest you deny your God ; ” Josh. xxiv. 27. So I may say, the places where you have kneeled, and prayed, and promised, will be witnesses against you, if you be not firm to God. The churches that you have assembled in, the places you have walked in, in your solitary meditations ; the persons that have heard your promises and professions ; the world about you that hath seen your forwardness, will all witness against you if you be not firm.

(3.) It is you that have the life and kernel of mercies ; others have but the crumbs that fall from your tables. Others have common mercies, but you have the great and special mercies that accompany salvation. “ All things are yours,” and should not you be Christ’s ? 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. Of you it is that God is so exceeding tender, that he chargeth your enemies not to touch you, and tells them that touch you, that they “ touch the apple of his eye ; ” Zech.

ii. 8. And should not you abound in love and holiness? and should you not be as tender of his favour, and his law, and honour, as of the apple of your eye? Should not he that toucheth the name, and law, and honour of God, by profaning them by sin, be as one that toucheth the apple of your eye?

(4.) You have a Spirit, and heavenly life within you, which the rest of the world are unacquainted with. And can you think it is not something extraordinary, that God must needs expect from you? Will you not "walk in the Spirit," which is given you, and mortify the flesh by it? Gal. v. 16, 17. 24. Is there not more expected from the living than the dead? Surely he that hath made you new creatures, and made you partakers of the Divine Nature, doth expect somewhat divine in your affections and devotions, and that you be somewhat more than men.

(5.) Moreover, it is you above others, for whom the word and messengers of God are sent! We must speak to all: but it is you that God's special eye is upon; it is your salvation that he intends to accomplish by us. There were many widows in the days of Elias, and many lepers in the days of Elisha; Luke iv. 26, 27. But it was but to one of them that the prophet was sent! We make the ungodly multitude even rage against us, and ministers are hated for magnifying the grace of God to you, and declaring his special love to you above others. When Christ himself had spoken to you the forecited the words, it is said in the next verses, 28, 29. that "all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." This was the entertainment of Christ himself, when he did but declare how few it is that God will save, and for whose sakes he specially sends his messengers. And must we incur all this for magnifying you, and will you dishonour yourselves? Is all our study and labour for you, and our lives for you, and all things for you, and will not you be wholly, and to the utmost of your strength for God? Are you called out of all the world for salvation, and will you not answer this admirable, differencing grace, by an admirable difference from those that must

perish, and by an admirable excellency in meekness, humility, self-denial, and heavenliness, above other men?

(6.) Moreover, you know more, and have a greater experience to assist you than others have; and, therefore, you should excel them accordingly. Others have but heard of the odiousness of sin, but you have seen and felt it. Others have heard of God's displeasure, but you have tasted it to the breaking or bruising of your hearts! You have been warned at the very quick, as if Christ had spoken to your very flesh and bones, "Go thy way, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." And as Ezra said (chap. ix. 13.), "After all that is come upon us, should we again break thy commandments; wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hast consumed us?" So, if after all your spiritual experiences, after so many tastes of the bitterness of sin, and groans, and prayers, and cries against it, you shall yet live as like to the wicked as you dare, and be familiar with that which hath cost you so dear! How do you think that God must take this at your hands? You have tasted of the sweetness of the love of Christ, and wondered at the unspeakable riches of his grace! You have tasted the sweetness of the hopes of glory, and of the powers of the world to come! You have perceived the necessity and excellency of holiness, by inward experience! And if, after all this, you will draggle on the earth, and live below your own experiences, contenting yourselves with an infancy of love, and life, and fruitfulness, how much do you then transgress against the rules of reason, and of equity!

(7.) Moreover, all the world expecteth much more from you, than from any others. God expecteth more from you, for he hath given you more, and meaneth to do more for you. Must you be in the eternal joys of heaven, when all your unsanctified neighbours are in torments, and yet will you not more endeavour to excel them? Is it not unreasonable to expect to be set eternally at so vast a distance from the ungodly world, even as far as heaven is from hell, and yet to be content to differ here but a little from them in holiness? The Lord knows that poor, forsaken, impenitent sinners will do no better, but rage, and be confident, till they are past remedy; he looks for no better from them than to neglect him, and slight his Son, and word, and ways; and

to go on in worldliness and fleshly living ; to be filthy still, and careless, and presumptuous, and self-conceited still. But it is higher matters that he expects from you ; and good reason, he hath done more for you, and prepared you for better things ! The ministers of Christ do look for little better from many of their poor, ignorant, ungodly neighbours, but even to rub out their days in security, and self-deceit, and to be barren after all their labours, if not to hate us for seeking to have saved them. But it is you that their eyes are most upon, and you that their hearts are most upon. Their comfort, and the fruit of their lives, lies much in your hands : saith Paul, “ Brethren, we were comforted over you in all our afflictions and distress, by your faith. For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord ! For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God. Night and day praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith ;” 1 Thess. iii. 7—9. You see here, that your pastors’ lives are in your hands. If you stand fast, they live. For the end of life is more than life ; and your salvation is the end of our lives. If the impenitent world reproach us, and abuse and persecute us, we suffer it joyfully, as long as our work goeth on with you. But when you are at a stand, when you are barren, and scandalous, and passionate, and dishonour your profession, and put us in fears, lest we have bestowed all our labour on you in vain ; this breaks our hearts above any worldly crosses whatsoever. O when the people that we should rejoice and glory in should prove unruly, self-conceited, peevish, proud, every one running his own way, falling into divisions, contentions, or scandals, this is the killing of the comforts of your ministers. When the ungodly shall hit us in the teeth with your scandals and divisions, and say, ‘ These are the godly people that you boasted of, see now what is become of them,’ this is the smoke to our eyes, and the gall and vinegar that is given us by the adversary. And though still we know that our reward is with the Lord, yet can we not choose but be wounded for your sakes, and for the sake of the cause and the name of God.

Yea, the world itself expecteth more from you than others. When men talk of great matters, and profess as every Christian doth, to look for the greatest matters of

eternity, and to live for no lower things than everlasting fellowship with God and angels, no wonder then if the world do look for extraordinary matters from you. If you tell them of reaching heaven, they will look to see you winged like angels, and not to creep on earth like worms. If you say that you are more than men, they look you should shew it, by doing more than men can do ; even by denying yourselves, and forgiving injuries, and loving your enemies, and blessing those that curse you, and contemning this world, and having your conversation in heaven. O sirs, believe it, it is not small or common things that will satisfy the expectations of God or men, of ministers, or of the world themselves, concerning you.

(8.) Yea, moreover God himself doth make his boast of you, and call out the world to observe your excellency ; he sets you up as the light of the world, to be beheld by others. He calls you in his word, “his peculiar treasure above all people ;” Exod. xix. 5. Deut. xiv. 3. Psal. cxxxv. 4. “A peculiar people, purified, and zealous of good works ;” Tit. ii. 14. He called you “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Ye are as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ ;” 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9. You are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible ;” (1 Pet. i. 23.) and “are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” God hath “delivered you from the power of darkness, and translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom you have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins ;” Col. i. 12—14. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ;” Rom. viii. 16, 17. “All things shall work together for your good. He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ;” ver. 28. 32. Nothing but the illuminated soul can discern “the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power ;” Ephes. i. 18, 19. “When we were dead in sins, he hath

quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Jesus Christ." He hath "brought us nigh that were far off," so that "by one Spirit we have access to the Father by Christ; and are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God;" Ephes. ii. 5—7. 13. 17—19. "We are members of the body of Christ, we are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant;" Heb. xii. 22—24.

Brethren, shall the Lord speak all this, and more than this in the Scripture, of your glory, and will you not prove yourselves glorious, and study to make good this precious word? Doth he say, "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;" (Prov. xii. 26.), and will you not study to shew yourselves more excellent indeed? Shall all these high things be spoken of you, and will you live so far below them all? What a heinous wrong is this to God. He sticks not in boasting of you, to call you his jewels (Mal. iii. 17.), and tells the world he will make them one day discern the "difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not;" ver. 18. He tells the world, that his coming in judgment will be "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe;" 2 Thess. i. 10. It is openly professed by the apostle John, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;" 1 John v. 19. He challengeth any "to condemn you, or lay anything to your charge, professing that it is he that justifieth you;" casting the saints into admiration by his love. "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. He challengeth tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, or nakedness, peril, or sword, to separate you, if they can, from the love of God. He challengeth death and life, angels, principalities, and powers, things present, and things to come, height and depth, or any other creature, to

separate you, if they are able, from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord ; Rom. viii. 35. 37—39. Shall the Lord of heaven thus make his boast of you to all the world, and will you not make good his boasting? Yea, I must tell you, he will see that it be made good to a word ! And if you be not careful of it yourselves, and it be not made good in you, then you are not the people that God thus boasteth of. He tells the greatest persecutors to their faces, that the meek, the humble, little ones of his flock, “ have their angels beholding the face of God in heaven ;” (Matt. xviii. 10.) and that at the great and dreadful day of judgment, they shall be set at his right hand as his sheep, with a “ Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom,” when others are set at his left hand as goats, with a “ Go ye cursed, into everlasting fire ;” Matt. xxv. He tells the world, that he that receiveth a converted man, that is become as a little child, receiveth Christ himself ; and that “ whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in him, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea ;” Matt. xviii. 3—6. Mark ix. 42. Luke xvii. 2.

O sirs, must God be thus wonderfully tender of you, and will you not now be very tender of his interest and your duty? Shall he thus difference you from all the rest of the world, and will you not study to declare the difference? The ungodly even gnash the teeth at ministers, and Scriptures, and Christ himself, for making such a difference between them and you ; and will you not let them see that it is not without cause? I entreat you, I require you, in the name of God, see that you answer these high commendations, and shew us that God hath not boasted of you beyond your worth?

(9.) Consider this as the highest motive of all ; God doth not only magnify you and boast of you, but also he hath made you the living images of his blessed self, his Son Jesus Christ, his Spirit and his holy word ; and so he hath exposed himself, his Son, his Spirit, and his word, to be censured by the world, according to your lives.

The express image of the Father's person is the Son ; Heb. i. 3. The Son is declared to the world by the Holy Ghost : the Holy Ghost hath indited the Scriptures, which therefore bear the image of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

This holy word, both law and promise, is written in your hearts, and put into your inner parts by the same Spirit ; 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. viii. 10. x. 16. So that as God hath imprinted his holy nature in the Scripture, so hath he made this word the seal, to imprint again his image on your hearts. And you know that common eyes can better discern the image in the wax, than on the seal : though I know that the hardness of the wax, or something lying between, or the imperfect application, may cause an imperfection in the image on the wax, when yet the image on the seal is perfect : and therefore the world hath no just cause to censure God, or Christ, or the Spirit, or the word to be imperfect, because that you are so ; but yet they will do it, and their temptation is great. O sirs ! how would your prince take it of you, or how would your poorest friend take it of you, if you should hang forth a deformed picture of them to the view of all that shall pass by ; and should represent them as blind, or leprous, or lame, wanting a leg, or an arm, or an eye ? Would they not say that you unworthily exposed them to scorn ? So if you will take on you to be the living images of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, and the word ; and yet will be blind, and worldly, and passionate, and proud, and unruly, and obstinate, or lazy, and negligent, and little differing from those that bear the image of the devil ; what do you but proclaim that the image of God, and of satan, and the world do little differ ; and that God is thus unrighteous and unholy as you are !

(10.) Lastly consider, That the faithful servants of Christ are few ; and therefore if those few dishonour him, and prove not fast to him ; what do you, but provoke him to forsake all the world, and make an end of all the sons of men ? It is but a little flock to whom he will give the kingdom ; Luke xii. 32. It is but a few from whom God expecteth any great matter ; and shall those few prove deceitful to him ? It must be you or none that must honour the Gospel. You or none that must be exemplary to the world ; and shall it be none at all ? Shall all the workmanship of God abuse him ? Shall he have no honour from any inferior creature ? How can you then expect that he should preserve the world ? For will he be at so much care to keep up a world to dishonour and abuse him ? If the turning of men's hearts prevent it not, he would come and smite the earth with a curse,

Mal. iv. 6. For the "land that beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned;" Heb. vi. 7, 8. "If therefore Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah sin;" Hosea iv. 15. If the vessels of wrath prepared to destruction will be blind, and sensual, and filthy still, yet let pollution be far from the sanctified. "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified;" 1 Cor. vi. 11. O let the Lord be magnified in his saints: blot not out his image: receive not his impressions defectively and by the halves. Let the name of the most Holy One be written in your very foreheads. O that you would be so tender of the honour of the Lord, and shine forth so brightly in holiness and righteousness, that he that runs might read whose servants you are, and know the image and superscription of God, upon the face of your conversations! That as clearly as light is seen in and from the sun, and the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God is seen in the frame of the creation, and of Scripture; so might the same shine forth in you, that you might be "holy as God is holy;" (1 Pet. i. 16.) and "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect;" (Matt. v. 48.) that they that would know God may see him in his saints, where his image is, or should be so lively and discernable. And they that cannot read and understand the Scripture, or the works of creation, or disposing providence, may read and understand the holy and heavenly representations of your lives.

Men are apt to look after images of the Godhead, because they are carnal and far from God. O you that are appointed to bear his image, see that you so represent him to the eyes of the world, as may be to his glory, and not to his dishonour, and take not the name of God in vain.

It is so desirable for God, and for the church, and for your own peace and happiness, that Christians should grow up to a ripeness in grace, and be rooted, built up, confirmed, and abound according to my text, that it hath drawn out from me all these words of exhortation thereunto; though one would think, that to men of such holy principles and experience, it should be more than needs; but if all will but serve to awaken the weak to a diligent progress, I shall be glad, and have my end. The great matter that I intended, when I began this discourse, is yet behind; and that is, the giving you such Directions as may tend to your confirmation

and perseverance ; which I shall now proceed to : but I entreat every reader that hath any spark of grace in his soul, that he will resolve to put these Directions in practice, and turn them not off with a bare perusal or approbation. Let me reap but thus much fruit of all my foregoing exhortations, and I shall not think my labour lost.

Twenty Directions for Confirmation in a State of Grace.

Direct. I. ‘ Be sure that the foundation be well laid, both in your heads and hearts ; or else you can never attain to confirmation, nor be savingly built up.’

To this end you must know what the foundation is, and how it must be soundly laid. The foundation hath two parts or respects, according to the faculties of the soul where it must be laid. The first is, the truth of the doctrine and matter, and the second is, the goodness of it. As true, the foundation is laid in our understandings ; as good, it is laid in the will. Concerning both these, we must therefore first consider of the matter of the foundation, and then of the manner how that must be received or laid. And the foundation is that matter or object of our faith, and hope, and love, which is essential to a Christian ; that is, to the Christian saving faith, hope, and love. This hath been always contained in our baptism, because baptizing us is making us visible Christians, or the solemn entrance into the state of Christianity. As therefore we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil ; so the doing of this unfeignedly, without equivocation, according to the Scripture sense of the words, is the essence of Christianity, or the right laying of the foundation. So that the foundation-principle, or fundamental matter, is, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The secondary foundation, or fundamental doctrine, is, those Scripture propositions that express our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When we name the three persons as the object of the Christian faith, we express names of relation, which contain both the persons, nature and offices or undertaken works ; without either of which, God were not God, and Christ were not Christ, and the Holy Ghost were not in the sense of our articles of faith the Holy

Ghost. As we must therefore believe that there is one only God ; so we must believe that God the Father is the first in the Holy Trinity of Persons ; that the whole Godhead is perfect and infinite in being, and power, and wisdom, and goodness, (in which all his attributes are comprehended ; but yet a distinct understanding of them all is not of absolute necessity to salvation). That this God is the Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things, and the Owner and Ruler of mankind, most just and merciful : that as he is the beginning of all, so he is the ultimate end, and the chief good of man, which before all things else must be loved and sought. This is to be believed concerning the Godhead, and the Father in person. Concerning the Son, we must moreover believe, that he is the same God with the Father, the second person in Trinity, incarnate and so become man, by a personal union of the Godhead and manhood : that he was without original or actual sin, having a sinless nature, and a sinless life : that he fulfilled all righteousness, and was put to death as a sacrifice for our sins, and gave himself a ransom for us ; and being buried, he rose again from the dead, and afterwards ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of all, and intercedeth for believers ; that he will come again and raise the dead, and judge the world, the righteous to everlasting life, and the wicked to everlasting punishment : that this is the only Redeemer, “ the Way, the Truth, and the Life ;” neither is there access to the Father but by him, nor salvation in any other. Concerning the Holy Ghost, we must believe that he is the same one God, the third person in Trinity, sent by the Father and the Son to inspire the prophets and apostles ; and that the doctrine inspired and miraculously attested by him is true : that he is the Sanctifier of those that shall be saved, renewing them after the image of God, in holiness and righteousness, giving them true repentance, faith, hope, love, and sincere obedience ; causing them to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil ; thus gathering a holy church on earth to Christ, who have by his blood the pardon of all their sins, and shall have everlasting blessedness with God.

This is the essence of the Christian faith, as to the matter of it. As to the manner of receiving it by the understanding, 1. It must be received as certain truth of God’s revelation, upon the credit of his word, by a lively, effectual be-

lief; piercing so deep as is necessary for its prevalency with the will. 2. And it must be entirely received, and not only a part of it: though all men have not so exactly formed distinct apprehensions of every member of this belief, as some have, yet all true Christians have a true apprehension of them. We feel by daily experience, that with the wisest some matters are truly understood by us, which yet are not so distinctly and clearly understood, as to be ready for an expression. I have oft, in matters that I am but studying, a light that gives me a general, imperfect, but true conception, which I cannot yet express; but when another hath helped me to form my conception, I can quickly and truly say, that was it that I had an unformed apprehension of before, and it that I meant but could not utter; not so much for want of words, as for want of a full and distinct conception.

2. The matter of our Christianity to be received by the will, is as followeth: As we must consent to all the aforementioned truths, by the belief of the understanding, so the pure Godhead must be received as the fountain, and our end. The Father as our Owner, Ruler and Benefactor, on the title of creation and redemption, and as our everlasting happiness. The Son as our only Saviour by redemption, bringing us pardon, reconciliation, holiness and glory, and delivering us from sin and satan, and the wrath and curse of God, and from hell. The Holy Ghost as our Guide and Sanctifier. All which containeth our renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, and carnal self that is the point of their unity and heart of the old man. This is the good that must be embraced, or accepted by the will.

And secondly, as to the manner of receiving it, it must be done unfeignedly, resolvedly, unreservedly, or absolutely, and habitually, by an inward covenanting of the heart, as I have formerly explained it. And this is the essence of Christianity; this is true believing in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: this is the foundation, and this is the right laying of it.

And now the thing that I am persuading you to is, to see that this foundation be surely laid, in head and heart.

And, 1. That it may be surely laid in the head, you must labour, (1.) To understand these articles. And, (2.) To see the evidence of their verity, that you may firmly believe

them. And, (3.) To consider of the worth and necessity of the matter revealed in them, that your judgments may most highly esteem it. This is the sure laying the foundation in the head.

To these ends you should first learn some catechism, and be well acquainted with the principles of religion ; and also be much in reading or hearing the holy Scripture, and inquiring of your teachers, and others that can help you ; and see that you take your work before you, and step not higher till this be done. And then all other following truths, and duties, and promised benefits, must all be so learned as to be built upon this foundation, and joined to it, as receiving their life and strength from hence, and never looked upon as separated from this ; nor as more excellent and necessary.

For want of learning well, and believing soundly these principles, essentials, or fundamentals of Christianity, some of our people can go no further, but stand all their days in their ignorance, at a nonplus : some of them go on in a blind profession, deceiving themselves by building upon the sand, and hold true doctrine by a false, unsound belief of it : and when the floods and storms do beat upon their building it falls, and great is the fall thereof. With some of them it falls upon the first assault of any seducer that hath interest in them, or advantage on them ; and abundance swallow up errors, because they never well understood, or firmly believed fundamental truths. With others of them, the building falls not until death, because they lived not under any shaking temptations. But it being but a perseverance in an unsound profession, will nevertheless be ineffectual to their salvation.

2. When you have thus laid the foundation in your understanding, be sure above all that it be firmly laid in your heart or will. Take heed lest you should prove false and unsteadfast in the holy covenant ; and lest you should take in the word but into the surface of the soul, and not give it depth of earth and rooting ; and lest you should come to Christ but as a servant upon trial, and make not an absolute resignation of yourselves to him : of which I warned you in the former Directions.

O this is it that makes our people fall so fast in a day of trial ; some shrink in adversity ; and some are enticed away by prosperity. Greatness and honour deceiveth one, and riches run away with another, and fleshly pleasure poisons a

third, and his conscience, religion, salvation, and all, he sacrificeth to his belly, and swalloweth it down his throat; and all the love, and goodness of God, the blood of Christ, the workings of the Spirit, the precepts and promises, and threatenings of the word, and the joy and torments which once they seemed to believe, all are forgotten, or have lost their force. And all because the foundation was not laid well at the first. But because this was the very business of the former Directions, I will dismiss it now.

Direct. II. ‘Think not that all is done when once you are converted; but remember that the work of your Christianity then comes in, and must be as long as the time of your lives.’

Of this also I shall say but little, because it is the drift of all the moving considerations before-going. I doubt it is the undoing of many to imagine, that if once they are sanctified, they are so sure in the hands of Christ, that they have no more care to take, nor no more danger to be afraid of, and at last think that they have no more to do, as of necessity to salvation; and thus prove that indeed they were never sanctified. I confess, when a man is truly converted, the principal part of his danger is over; he is safe in the love and care of Christ, and none can take him out of his hands. But this is but part of the truth; the other part must be taken with it, or we deceive ourselves. There is still a great deal of work before us; and holiness is still the way to happiness; and much care and diligence is required at our hands. And it is no more certain that we shall be saved by Christ, than it is that we shall be kept in faith, and love, and holy obedience by him. It is as true that none can separate us from the love of God, and from a care to please him, and from a holy diligence in the work of our salvation, as that none can take us out of his hands, and bring us into a state of condemnation. He that is resolved to bring us to glory, is as much resolved to bring us to it by perseverance in holiness and diligent obedience; for he never decreeth one without the other; and he will never save us by any other way.

Indeed, when we are converted we have escaped many and grievous dangers; but yet there are many more before us, which we must by care and diligence escape. We are translated from death to life, but not from earth to heaven.

We have the life of grace, but yet we are short of the life of glory. And why have we the life of grace but to use it, and to live by it? Why came we into the vineyard but to work? And why came we into the army of Christ but to fight? Why came we into the race but to run for the prize? Or why turned we into the right way, but to travel in it? We never did God faithful service, till the day of our conversion, and then it is that we begin. And shall we be so sottish as to think we have done, when we have but begun? Now you begin to live that before were dead. Now you begin to wake that before were asleep. And, therefore, now you should begin to work that before did nothing, or rather a thousandfold worse than nothing. Work is the effect of life; it is the dead that lie still in darkness, and do nothing. If you had rather be alive than dead, you should rather delight in action than in idleness. It is now that you set to sea, and begin your voyage for the blessed land; many a storm, and wave, and tempest must you yet expect. Many a combat with temptations must you undergo; many a hearty prayer have you yet to pour forth. Many and many a duty to perform to God and man. Think not to have done your care and work, till you have done your lives. Whether you come in at the first hour or at the last, you must work till night if you will receive your wages. And think not this a grievous doctrine. It is your privilege, it is your joy, your earthly happiness, that you may be so employed; that you that till now have lived like swine, or moles, or earthly vermin, may now take wing and fly to God, and walk in heaven, and talk with saints, and be guarded by angels; is this a life to be accounted grievous? Now you begin to come to yourselves; to understand what you have to do in the world; to live like men, that you may live like angels! And, therefore, now you should begin accordingly to bestir you. I would not have you retain the same measure of fears of God's displeasure, nor the same apprehensions of your misery, nor the doubts and perplexities of mind, which you were under at your first conversion; for these were occasioned by the passage in your change, and the weakness of your grace in that beginning, and your former folly made them necessary for a time. But I would have you retain your fear of sinning, and be much more in the love of God, and in his service, than you were at first.

Temptations will haunt you to the last hour of your lives. If, therefore, you would not fall by these temptations, you must watch and pray to the last. Give not over watching, till satan give over tempting and watching advantages against you. The promise is still but on condition that you persevere and abide in Christ, and continue rooted and steadfast in the faith, and overcome and be faithful to the death, as you may see in John xv. throughout. John viii. 31. Rev. ii. iii. Col. i. 22, 23. "Work out, therefore, your salvation with fear and trembling;" Phil. ii. 12. If you have begun resolvedly, proceed resolvedly. It is the undoing of men's souls to think that all the danger is over, and lose their apprehensions of it, when they are yet but in the way; when their care and holy fears abate, their watch goes down; the soul is laid open as a common wilderness, and made a prey to every lust. And, therefore, still know, your work is not done, till your life be done.

Direct. III. 'Be sure that you understand wherein your establishment and growth consisteth, that you may not miscarry by seeking somewhat else instead of it; nor think you have it when you have it not, or that you want it, when you have it, and so be needlessly disquieted about it.'

For your assistance in this, I shall further shew you wherein your confirmation and growth consisteth in its several parts, both as it is subjected or exercised in your understandings, your wills, and affections, and your conversations.

1. As holiness is in the understanding, it is commonly in Scripture called, light and knowledge, as comprehending the several parts. And confirmation and growth of this must consist in these seven following parts.

1. It is ordinary with new converted Christians, to see the great essential truths of the Christian profession, with a great imperfection as to the evidences that discover them. Either they see but some of the solid evidence, overlooking much more than they see; or, more usually, they receive the truth itself upon some low insufficient evidence at first, and then proceed to a kind of mixture, taking it upon some evidences that are valid and sufficient, and joining some that are invalid with them. But you must grow beyond this infancy of understanding; when you see greater and sounder evidences for the truth than you did before; and when you

see more of these solid evidences, and leave not out so many as you did ; and when you lay smaller stress upon the smaller evidences, and none upon those that are invalid, and indeed no evidences, then are your understandings more confirmed in the truth, and this is a principal part of their growth. So we find the Samaritans of Sychar, “ Many of them believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.” (This was the first faith upon a weaker evidence.) “ And many more believed, because of his own words, and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world ;” John iv. 39—42. Here is a notable confirmation and growth, by believing and knowing the same thing which they believed before ; it was before believed on weaker evidence, and now upon stronger. Thus Nathaniel, by Philip’s persuasion, was drawn to Christ, but when he perceived his omniscience, that he knew the heart and things that were distant, and out of the reach of common knowledge, he is confirmed, and saith, “ Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.” And yet Christ telleth him, that there were far greater evidences yet to be revealed, which might beget a more confirmed, stronger faith. “ Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? Thou shalt see greater things than these ; verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man ;” John i. 45. 49—51. There is not one Christian of many thousands, that at first hath a full sight of the solid evidences of the Christian doctrine ; but must grow more and more in discerning those reasons for the truth which he believeth, which in the beginning he did not well discern. It is not the most confident belief that is always the strongest confirmed belief ; but there must be sound grounds and evidence to support that confidence, or else the confidence may soon be shaken ; and is not sound, even while it seems unshaken. And here young beginners must be forwarned of a most dangerous snare of the deceiver, because at first the truth itself is commonly received upon feeble and defective grounds or evidence. It is the custom of the devil and his deceiving instruments, to shew the young Christian the weakness of those grounds, and thence

to conclude that his case is naught. For it is too easy to persuade such that the cause hath no better grounds than they have seen. For having not seen any better, they can have no particular knowledge of them. And they are too apt to think over-highly of their knowledge, as if there were no more reasons for the truth than they themselves have reached to, and other men did see no more than they. And thus poor souls forsake the truth, which they should be built up and confirmed in ; and take that for a reason against the truth, which is but a proof of their own infirmity. I meet with very few that turn to any heresy or sect, but this is the cause. They were at first of the right mind, but not upon sound and well-laid grounds ; but held the truth upon insufficient reasons. And then comes some deceiver, and beats them out of their former grounds, and so having no better, they let go the truth, and conclude that they were all this while mistaken. Just as if, in my infancy, I should know my own father only by his clothes, and when I grow a little bigger, one should tell me that I was deceived, this is not my father, and to convince me should put his clothes upon another, or tell me that another may have such clothes, and hereupon I should be so foolish as to yield that I was mistaken ; and that this man is not my father. As if the thing were false, because my reasons were insufficient. Or as if you should ask the right way in your travel, and one should tell you, that by such and such marks you may know your way ; and think you have found those marks a mile or two short of the place where they are ; but when you understand that those are not the marks that you were told of, you turn back again before you come at them, and conclude that you have missed the way. So is it with these poor deluded souls, that think all discoveries of their own imperfections, and every confutation of their own silly arguments, to be a confutation of the truths of God, which they did hold ; when, alas, a strong, well-grounded Christian would make nothing of defending the cause which they give up against more strong and subtle enemies ; or, at least, would hold it fast themselves. Well, this is the first part of your growth in knowledge, when you can see more or better evidences, for the great truths of Christianity, than you saw before.

2. Moreover, you must grow to a clearer apprehension

of the very same reasons and evidences of the truth, which you saw before. For when a weak Christian hath the best arguments and grounds in the world, yet he hath so dim a sight of them, that makes them find the slighter entertainment in his affections. The best reason in the world can work but little on him that hath but a little understanding of it. There are various degrees of knowledge, not only of one and the same truth, because of the diversity of evidence, but of one and the same evidence and reason of that truth. I can well remember myself, that I have many a year had a common argument for some weighty truth, and I have made use of it, and thought it good, but yet had but little apprehension of the force of it: and many years after, a sudden light hath given me (in my studies) so clear an apprehension of the force of that same argument, which I knew so long, as that it hath exceedingly confirmed and satisfied me, more than ever I was before. I beseech you, Christians, consider of this weighty truth; it is not the knowledge of the truth, that will serve your turns, without a true and solid knowledge of that truth; nor is it the hearing or understanding of the best grounds and reasons, or proofs in the world, that will serve the turn, unless you have a deep and solid apprehension of those proofs and reasons. A man that hath the best arguments may forsake the truth, because he hath not a good understanding of those arguments. As a man that hath the best weapons in the world may be killed for want of strength and skill to use them. I tell you, if you knew every truth in the Bible, you may grow much in knowledge of the very same truths which you know.

3. Moreover, a young, ungrounded Christian, when he seeth all the fundamental truths, and seeth good evidence and reasons for them, perhaps may be yet ignorant of the right order and place of every truth. It is a rare thing to have young professors to understand the necessary truths methodically. And this is a very great defect. For a great part of the usefulness and excellency of particular truths consisteth in the respect they have to one another. This, therefore, will be a considerable part of your confirmation and growth in your understandings, to see the body of Christian doctrine, as it were, at one view, as the several parts of it are united in one perfect frame; and to know what aspect one point hath upon another, and which are their

due places. There is a great difference between the sight of the several parts of a clock or watch, as they are disjointed, and scattered about, and the seeing them conjoined, and in use and motion. To see here a pin, and there a wheel, and not know how to set them all together, nor ever see them in their due places, will give but little satisfaction. It is the frame and design of holy doctrine that must be known, and every part should be discerned as it hath its particular use to that design, and as it is connected with the other parts. By this means only can the true nature of theology, together with the harmony and perfection of truth, be clearly understood. And every single truth also, will be much better perceived by him that seeth its place and order, than by any other. For one truth exceedingly illustrates and leads in another into our understanding. Nay, more than so, your own hearts and lives will not be well ordered, if the method or order of the truths received should be mistaken. For the truths of God are the very instruments of your sanctification, which is nothing but their effects upon your understandings and wills, as they are set home by the Holy Ghost. Truths are the seal, and your souls are the wax, and holiness is the impression made. If you receive but some truths, you will have but some part of the due impression. Nay, indeed, they are so coherent, and make up the sense by their necessary conjunction, that you cannot receive any one of them sincerely, without receiving any one that is of the essence of the Christian belief. And if you receive them disorderly, the image of them on your souls will be as disorderly; as if your bodily members were monstrously displaced. Study, therefore, to grow in the more methodical knowledge of the same truths which you have received. And though you are not yet ripe enough to discern the whole body of theology in due method, yet see so much as you have attained to know, in the right order and placing of every part. As in anatomy, it is hard for the wisest physician to discern the course of every branch of veins and arteries, but yet they may easily discern the place and order of the principal parts, and greater vessels. So it is in divinity, where no man hath a perfect view of the whole, till he come to the state of perfection with God; but every true Christian hath the knowledge of all the essentials, and may know the order and places of them all.

4. Another part of your confirmation and growth in understanding, is, in discerning the same truths more practically than you did before, and perceiving the usefulness of every truth, for the doing of its work in your hearts and lives. It was never the will of God that bare speculation should be the end of his revelations, or of our belief. Divinity is an effective, practical science, therefore must truths be known and believed, that the good may be received, and a holy change may be made by them, on the heart and life. Even the doctrine of the Trinity itself is practical, and the fountain of that which is more easily discerned to be practical. There is not one article of our faith, but hath a special work to do upon our hearts and lives; and, therefore, a special fitness for that work. Now the understandings of young Christians do discern many truths, when they see but little of the work to be done by them, and the special usefulness of those truths to those works. This, therefore, must be your daily inquiry, and in this you must grow. As if you come into a workman's shop, and see a hundred tools about you, it is a small matter to discern the shape and fashion of them, and what metal they are made of; but you will further ask, what is this tool to do, and what is that to do. If ever you will learn the trade, you must know the use of every tool. So must you, if you will be skilful Christians, be acquainted with the use of the truths which you have received; and know that this truth is to do this work, and that truth is to do that work, upon the soul and life. A husbandman may know as many herbs, and flowers, and fruits as a physician, and be able to tell them all by name, and say, this is such a herb, and that is such an one; and to perceive the shape and beauty of them. But he knows little or nothing that they are good for, unless to feed his cattle. Whereas, the physician can tell you, that this herb is good against this disease, and that herb against another disease, and can make use of those same herbs to save men's lives, which other men tread under foot as useless. A countryman may see the names that are written on the apothecaries' boxes, but it is the physician that knows the medicinal use of the drugs. So, many men that are unsanctified, may know the outside of holy doctrine, that little know what use is to be made of it. And the weak Christian knows less of this than the grown, confirmed Christian doth. Learn, there-

fore, every day, more and more, to know what every truth is good for, that this is for the exercise and strengthening of such a grace, and this is good against such or such disease of the soul. Every leaf in the Bible hath a healing virtue in it. They are the leaves of the tree of life. Every sentence is good for something. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Not a word is without its usefulness.

5. Moreover, you must grow, not only in knowing the usefulness of truths, but also in knowing how to use them, that you may have the benefit of that worth that is in them. Many a man knows what use a workman's tools are for, that yet knows not how himself to use them. And many a one knows the use and virtue of herbs and drugs, that knows not how to make a medicine of them, and compound and apply them. There is much skill to be used in knowing the seasons of application, and the measure, and what is fit for one, and what for another, that we may make that necessary variance, which diversity of conditions do require. As it is a work of skill in the pastors of the church, to "divide the word of God aright, and speak a word in season to the weary, and give the children their meat in due season;" (2 Tim. ii. 15. Isa. l. iv. Matt. xxiv. 45.) so is it also a work of skill, to do this for yourselves, to know what Scripture it is that doth concern you; and when, and in what measure to apply it, and in what order, and with what advantages or correctives to use it, as may be most for your own good. You may grow in this skill as long as you live; even in understanding how to use the same truths which you have long known. O what excellent Christians should we be, if we had but this holy skill, and hearts to use it. We have the whole armour of God to put on and use, but all the matter is how to use it. The same sword of the Spirit in the hand of a strong and skilful Christian, may do very much, which in the hand of a young, unskilful Christian, will do very little, and next to nothing. A young, raw physician may know the same medicines as an able experienced physician doth; but the great difference lieth in the skill to use them. This

is it that must make you rich in grace, when you increase in the skilful use of truths.

6. Moreover, your understandings may be much advanced, by knowing the same truths more experimentally than you did before. I mean such truths as are capable of experimental knowledge. Experience giveth us a far more satisfactory manner of knowledge, than others have that have no such experience. To know by hearsay, is like the knowing of a country in a map; and to know by experience, is like the knowing of the same country by sight. An experienced navigator, or soldier, or physician, or governor, hath another manner of knowledge than the most learned can have without experience; even a knowledge that confirmeth a man, and makes him confident. Thus may you daily increase in knowledge, about the same points that you knew long ago. When you have "tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious," (Psal. xxxiv. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 3.) you will know him more experimentally than you did before: when you have tasted the sweetness of the promise, and of pardon of sin, and peace with God, and the hopes of glory, you will have a more experimental knowledge of the riches of grace than you had before. And when you have lived awhile in communion with Christ and the saints, and walked awhile with God in a heavenly conversation, and maintained your integrity, and kept yourselves unspotted of the world, you will then know the nature and worth of holiness by a knowledge more experimental and satisfactory than before. And this is confirmation and growth in knowledge.

7. Moreover, you must labour to grow in higher estimation of the same truths which you knew before. And this will be a consequent of the forementioned acts. A child that findeth a jewel may set by it, for the shining beauty; when yet he may value it many thousand pounds below its worth. You see so much wisdom and goodness in God, the first hour of your new life, as causeth you to prefer him before the world; and you see so much of the necessity of a Saviour, so much love and mercy in Jesus Christ, as draweth up your hearts to him; and you see so much certainty and glorious excellency of the life to come, that makes you value it even more than your lives. But yet there is in all these such an unsearchable treasure, that you can never va-

lue them near their worth ; for all that thou hast seen of God, and Christ, and glory, there is a thousand times more excellency in them yet to be discerned. For all the beauty thou hast seen in holiness, it is a thousandfold more beautiful than ever thou didst apprehend it ; for all the evil thou hast seen in sin, it is a thousandfold worse than ever thou didst perceive it to be. So that if you should live a thousand years, you might still be growing in your estimation of those things which you knew the first day of your true conversion. For the deeper you dig into this precious mine, the greater riches will still appear to you. There is an ocean of excellency in one article of your belief, and you will never find the banks or bottom, till you come to heaven, and then you will find that it had neither banks nor bottom.

And thus I have shewed you what confirmation and growth is needful for your understandings, even about the very same truths, which at first you knew. And now I shall add,

8. You must also labour to understand more truths for number than at first you understood, and to reach to as much of the revealed will of God as you can, and not to stop in the mere essentials. For all divine revelations are precious, and of great use ; and none must be neglected. And the knowledge of many other truths, is of some necessity to our clear understanding of the essentials ; and also to our holding them fast, and practising them. “ Secret things belong to God, but things revealed, to us and to our children ;” Deut. xxix. 29.

But here I must give you this further advice : 1. That you proceed in due order, from the fundamental points, to those that lie next them ; and do not overpass the points of next necessity and weight, and go to higher and less needful matters, before you are ready for them. 2. And also see that you receive all following truths that are taught you, as flowing from the foundation, and conjoined with it. Disorderly proceedings have unspeakably wronged the souls of many thousands, when they are presently upon controversies, and smaller matters, before they understand abundance of more necessary things that must be first understood. This course doth make them lose their labour, and worse, it deceiveth the understanding instead of informing it ; and thereupon it perverts the will itself, and turns men to a heretical, proud, or perverse frame of spirit ; and then it must

needs mislead their practices, and cause them, like deluded men, to be zealous in doing mischief, while they think they are doing good. In common matters you can see, that you must learn and do things in their due order, or else you will but make fools of yourselves. Will you go to the top of the stairs or ladder, without beginning at the lower steps? Will you sow your ground before you manure or plough it? or can you reap before you sow it? Will you ride your colt before you break him? Will you rear a house before you frame it? Or will you teach your children Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, before they learn English? or to read the hardest books before they learn the easiest? or can they read before they learn to spell, or know their letters? No more can you learn the difficult controversies in divinity (as about the exposition of obscure prophecies, or doctrinal doubts), till you have taken up before you those many, great, and necessary truths that lie between. It would make a wise man pity them, and be ashamed to hear them, when young, raw, self-conceited professors, will fall into confident expositions of Daniel, the Revelations, or the Canticles, or such like, or into disputes about free-will, or predestination, or about the many controversies of the times, when, alas, they are ignorant of a hundred truths (about the covenants, justification, and the like) which must be known before they can reach the rest!

By this much that I have said already, you may understand, that, though we should reach as far as we can in knowing all necessary, revealed truths, yet the principal part of your growth in knowledge, when once you are converted, consisteth not in knowing more than you knew before, as to the number of truths, but in knowing better the very same fundamental truths, which you knew at first. This is the principal thing that I would here teach you. Abundance are deluded, by not understanding this; you see here you have seven several things in which you must daily grow in knowledge about the same truths which you first received. 1. You must see better and sounder reasons and evidences for the fundamental truths than you saw at first: or more such evidences than you did then perceive. 2. You must grow to a clearer sight or apprehension of those same evidences. 3. You must see truths more methodically, all, as it were, at one view, and all in their due proportion

and place, as the members of a well-composed body ; and how they grow together, and what strength one truth affords to another. 4. You must see every truth more practically than before, and know what use it is of, for your hearts and lives, and what you must do with it. 5. You must learn more skill in the using of these truths, when you know what they are good for ; and must be better able to manage them on yourselves and others. 6. You must know more experimentally than you did at first. 7. You must grow into a higher esteem of truths. All this you have to do besides your growing in the number of truths. And I must tell you, that as it was these essentials of Christianity that were the instrumental causes of your first conversion, and more needful and useful to you then, than ten thousand others ; so it is the very same points that you must always live upon, and the confirmation and growth of your souls in these, will be more useful to you than the adding of ten thousand more truths, which yet you know not. And, therefore, take this advice, as you love your peace and growth ; neglect not to know more, but bestow many and many hours in labouring to know better the great truths which you have received, for one hour that you bestow in seeking to know more truths which you know not ; believe it, this is the safe and thriving way. You know already that God is all-sufficient, and infinitely wise, and good, and powerful. And you know not, perhaps, the nature of free-will, or of God's decrees of election and reprobation, or a hundred the like points. True knowledge of any of the revealed things of God, is very desirable ; but yet, I must tell you, that you are forty times more defective here in your knowledge of that of God which you do know, than of the other which you know not ; that is, the want of more degrees of this necessary knowledge, is more dangerous to your souls than the total want of the less necessary knowledge. And the addition of more degrees to the more needful parts of knowledge, will strengthen and enrich you more than the knowing of less necessary things, which you knew not before at all. You know Christ crucified already, but perhaps you know not certain controversies about church-government, or the definitions and distinctions of many matters in divinity. It will be a greater growth now to your knowledge, to know a little more of

Christ crucified, whom you know already, than to know these lesser matters, which you know not yet at all. If you had already a hundred pounds in gold, and not a penny of silver, it will more enrich you to have another purse full of gold, than a purse full of silver. Trading in the richest commodities, is likelier to raise men to greater estates, than trading for matters of a smaller rate. They that go to the Indies for gold and pearl, may be rich if they get but little in quantity; when he may be poor that brings home ships laden with the greatest store of poor commodity. That man that hath a double measure of the knowledge of God in Christ, and the clearest, and deepest, and most effectual apprehensions of the riches of grace and the glory to come, and yet never heard of the most of the questions in Scotus, or Ockam, or Aquinas's sums is far richer in knowledge, and a much wiser man, than he that hath those controversies at his finger's ends, and yet hath but half his clearness and solidity of the knowledge of God and Christ, of grace and glory. There is enough in some one of the articles of your faith, in one of God's attributes, in one of Christ's benefits, in one of the Spirit's graces, to hold you study all your lives, and afford you still an increase of knowledge. To know God the Father, Son, and Spirit, and their relations to you, and operations for you, and your duties to them, and the way of communion with them, is that knowledge in which you must still be growing, till it be perfected by the celestial, beatifical vision. Those be not the wisest men that can answer most questions; but those that have the fullest intellectual reception of the infinite wisdom. You will confess that he is a wiser man, that hath wisdom to get and rule a kingdom, than he that hath wit enough to talk of a hundred trivial matters, which the other is ignorant of. That is the wisest physician that can do most to save men's lives; and not he that can best read a lecture of anatomy, or is readiest in the terms of his art. Knowledge is to be esteemed according to the use of it, and the dignity of its object, and not according to the number and subtlety of notions. And, therefore, I beseech you all, that are young and weak in the faith, take much more pains to grow in the fuller acquaintance with that same faith which you have received, than to be acquainted with smaller controversial truths which you never knew. Men use to call these higher

points, because they are more difficult ; but certainly the articles of your faith are much higher in point of excellency though they are lower in the due order of learning them, as foundation is the lowest part of the building, and is first laid, but is that which must bear up all the rest.

And here you must observe, how gracelessly and unlike to Christians those men speak, that say, ‘They care not for reading such a book, or hearing such or such a minister, because he tells them no more than they know already.’ And on that account some of them stay from church, because they hear nothing but what they know already. It is a certain sign that they do not know already the blessed nature of God, and the riches of Christ, which they say they know. For if they did, they could not hear or think too much of them. They would long to know more, and, therefore, to hear more of the same things. It is a sign the minister takes the course that tends to your edification and enriching in knowledge, when he is most upon the great and most necessary truths. All saints do make it their study to comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and know the love of God in Christ ; but when they have done, they confess that it “ passeth knowledge ;” Ephes. iii. 17—19. It is a graceless, wicked soul, in a state of damnation, that conceits he knows so much of God and Jesus Christ, and the essentials of Christianity, that he cares not for hearing these things any more, but had rather have novelties, and let these alone ; and feeleth not need of knowing much more, and more of the same truths ; and of using and living upon these vital principles which he knows. You have eaten bread, and drank beer a hundred times ; but perhaps you never did eat of sturgeon or whale, of a bear or a leopard, of chesnuts or pignuts, or many strange and dangerous fruits in all your life ; and yet I hope you will never seek after these, because they are novelties, and give over eating bread because you have eaten of it already. Nor will you churlishly refuse to go to a feast, because there is no meat but what you have eaten of before. We have not a new God to preach to you, nor a new Christ, nor a new Spirit, nor a new Gospel, nor a new church, nor a new faith, nor a new baptismal covenant, nor a new heaven, or hope, or happiness to propound ; Gal. i. 9, 10. Ephes. iv. 3—5. Your growth in methods, and definitions, and distinctions, and in

additional points of knowledge, is principally to be valued as it cleareth your understandings in the foresaid great essential points, and brings you up to God himself. Some wretches think they have quickly learned past the essential articles of the faith, and ere long they are past the higher points; and shortly they are past the Scripture itself, and throw it by, as a scholar that hath learnt one book, and must be entered into another. They understand not, that the ministry and Spirit are but to teach them the word of the Gospel; but they think they must outgrow the word and ministry, and the Spirit must teach them some other doctrine, or Gospel, which the written word doth not contain. I pray mark the apostle's warning: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace;" Heb. xiii. 9. And "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness;" Ephes. iv. 14.

11. Having shewed you wherein your growth consisteth in the understanding, I shall be short in the rest, and next I must tell you wherein it consisteth in the will.

And that is, 1. When upon good understanding and deep consideration, you are more fixedly, habitually, absolutely, and practically resolved for God and glory than before. So that you are grown more beyond all shaking doubtfulness, or wavering of mind, and beyond all unevenness, mutability, and inconstancy. When a man is thus satisfied, that none but God hath title to him, or can make him happy, and that none but Christ can reconcile him to God, and that it were a madness to make any other choice, and thereupon is settled and firm as Mount Zion, and can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee;" Psal. lxxiii. 25. When you are firmly resolved that, let God do with you what he will, and come of it what will, you will never choose another Master, or Saviour, or rule, or happiness, or way, or body, than you are in; and will never forsake the path of holiness; this is the fixed stability of the will, and the more of this, the more you grow.

2. And when you have the lowest esteem of the creatures, and greatest, and most resolved averseness to all that would draw you from God, and can meet the greatest worldly or

fleshly allurements with a holy contempt ; this shews a settled, confirmed will.

3. And also, when you are speedy in holy resolutions, and see nothing in a temptation, how great soever, that can make you demur upon it, or make a stop in a Christian course ; but go on to duty, as if the tempter had said nothing to you, and the flesh and the world had no interest in you ; and you do not so much as stand to think on it, whether you should yield to sin or not, as abhorring to call such a matter into question ; this shews a confirmed, fixed will ; and the more of this, the more of holiness.

111. The strength and growth of holy affections, consisteth principally in these particulars : 1. When the affections are lively, and not dull ; so that we make out after God and heaven with vigour and alacrity. 2. When they are ready at hand, and not to seek, and need not a great deal ado to quicken them, or call them in. 3. When they are more pure and unmixed, having least of the creature and most of God in them. 4. But principally (and the surest point to try them by) when they contain in them, or accompany the foresaid confirmation and resolvedness of the will ; for it is more the willingness that is in or with our affections, than the heat of them, that we must judge them by. 5. And lastly, when they follow the best guidance of the understanding, when they are hottest about the greatest matters, and not about the smaller or more doubtful things ; when they are obedient, and yielding to faith and holy reason, and not too ready to hearken to sense, and be moved about fleshly, sensible things. In these things lieth the growth of your affections.

iv. And then lastly, for your conversations, your stability, and growth consisteth, 1. In the readiness of your obedience. 2. In the fulness and universal exactness of it. 3. In the resolved conquest of all temptations that would pervert you. 4. In the diligent use of all those means, that may further confirm and strengthen you. 5. In the evenness of it, that it be constant, and not mixed with scandals, and stops in the way, or stepping out into by-paths. 6. In your fruitfulness and profitableness to others, according to the proportion of your talents ; that you study to do good, and do it with all the care, and wisdom, and diligence you can. 7. In the spirituality of it, that God be the principal,

and the end of all, and that all be animated from the believing consideration of his attributes, and the views of everlasting blessedness. So that you have such lively, fixed intentions of God, that you can perceive that you do all, even common things, for the purpose of his pleasure, will, and glory ; and that the love of God doth carry you about from duty to duty, and constrain you to it. 8. And lastly, in the measure of your present attainments of the end and fruits of your obedience. For a taste of these ends are here to be attained. When your inward graces are more confirmed and increased, and your talents are doubled, and when you bring God a great deal of honour in the world, so that by his graces shining in your works, your Father is glorified ; and when yourselves are readier to go to God, and meet your Redeemer, and long more for his appearing ; in all these consisteth the stability, growth, and excellency of your conversations.

And now, by all that I have said, you may see wherein your stability, strength, and growth doth not consist. 1. It doth not most, or much consist in speculations, or less useful truths. 2. It doth not consist in the mere heat of affections ; for zeal may be misguided, and do hurt, and may prove sometimes but a mere natural or distempered, sinful passion. 3. It consisteth not in mere fears, or purposes, that you are frightened into against your will. 4. Nor does it consist of the common gifts of grace or nature. 5. Nor yet in turning into groundless singularities, and unusual strains. But in a word, it consisteth in holy love, kindled by effectual faith. When a firmly believing soul is fullest of love to God, and Christ, and holiness, this is the most confirmed state of the soul ; and in this your chiefest growth consisteth.

My next advice to all young Christians, for their confirmation and growth in grace, is this :

Direct. IV. ‘ Grow downwards in humility ; be low and small in your own eyes, and affect not to be high or great in the eyes of others ; and still keep a deep apprehension of the greatness and danger of the sin of pride ; but especially of that called spiritual pride.’

It is the tree that hath the shallowest, weakest rooting that most shaketh, and is soonest overthrown : the deeper roots, the higher growth, for the most part. The building

that hath not a deep foundation, is soonest shaken and overthrown. Christ is our foundation; and humiliation digs deep and lets him into the heart. Pride is commonly thought to be the devil's first or chiefest sin. Sure I am, it is the proud that fall into his condemnation; 1 Tim. iii. 6. The pride of our first parents, affecting to be as gods in knowledge, was the inlet of all our sin and misery; and the tempter still followeth the way that he hath found to be so successful. It is pride, that like a storm or tempest, doth set all the world in the rage, and contention, and differences, and confusion, that we see them in. It is pride that hath filled the church with divisions; and it is pride that causeth the apostacy of most that fall away. And the more men have of it, the less do they usually discern it in themselves; I am sure the less do they hate it and lament it. And though one would think, that young beginners and weak Christians that have little to be proud of should be out of the danger of this temptation, yet experience tells us, that it is they that fall by it, more than the wiser and stronger Christians that have more to glory in: for the more men increase in wisdom, the more do they know their own unworthiness, their emptiness, and ignorance, and manifold sins: and the more do they know of the holiness and jealousy of God; and the more do they know of the evil of sin, and see what abundance of knowledge and grace they yet want; so that the more holy wisdom and experience, the less pride. But folly is the parent and nurse of pride. Children will be proud of toys and things of no value. There are two or three things that make young Christians in greater danger of spiritual pride than others. 1. Because they come so lately out of darkness, and so great a change is made upon their souls, that it makes them the more sensible of it; and therefore the readier to have high thoughts of themselves. Though one would think that the remembrance of former folly, and late dejectedness should keep them low, yet with too many that is quickly gone, and they know not how to receive a comforting message, but they make it an occasion of lifting up. 2. The ignorance of these novices or young Christians is such, that they little know what abundance of things they are yet ignorant of. Little do they know what knowledge they yet want; they think there is little more to be reached to than is in their sight, and therefore suppose themselves

somebody in the school of Christ, because they have learned the first lesson. 3. And by reason of this ignorance, they know not how to value the higher attainments and understandings of others, but look on the wisest as little wiser than themselves, because they are unacquainted with the matter of their wisdom, and therefore overlook it as if it were none, and consequently think too highly of themselves. 4. And withal, they have not that experience of their own hearts, that should make them jealous of them, as ancient Christians have.

The humble soul is still in an empty, craving temper ; he hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness, and therefore shall be satisfied ; Matt. v. 6. No man setteth so high a price on Christ and grace, and all the means of grace. Even the crumbs are welcome to him, which the proud despise. " The full soul loathes the honeycomb ; but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet ;" Prov. xxvii. 7. Therefore such beggars are most welcome to God : he hath respect to the humble, contrite soul ; Isa. lvii. 15. lxvi. 2. Psal. li. 17. " The hungry he filleth with good, but the rich he sendeth empty away ;" Luke i. 53. " He giveth more grace to the humble, when the proud are abhorred by him ;" 1 Pet. v. 5. The church of Laodicea, that said, " I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," was " miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ;" Rev. iii. 17. As many that are proud of their honour and birth, run out of all, by living above their estates, when meaner persons grow rich, because they are still gathering, and make much of every little : so proud professors of religion are in a consumption of the grace they have, while the humble increase, by making much of every little help, which is slighted and neglected by the proud, and by shunning all those spending courses, which the proud are plunged in. Be sure to keep mean thoughts of yourselves, of your knowledge, and parts, and grace, and duties, and be content to be mean in the esteem of others, if you would not be worse than mean in the esteem of God.

Direct. V. ' Exercise yourselves daily in a life of faith upon Jesus Christ, as your Saviour, your Teacher, your Mediator, and your King ; as your example, your wisdom, your righteousness, and your hope.'

All other studies and knowledge must be merely subservient to the study and knowledge of Christ ; 1 Cor. ii. 2.

That vain kind of philosophy which St. Paul so much cautioneth Christians against, is so far yet from being accounted vain, that by many called Christians, it is preferred before Christianity itself; and to shew that it is vain while they overvalue it, they can show no solid worth or virtue which they have got by it; but only a tumified mind, and an idle tongue, like a tinkling cymbal; 1 Cor. xiii. 1. xii. 31. ii. 4. 14—16. i. 18—21. 23, 24. 27. Col. ii. 8, 9. We are complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ver. 10. No study in the world will so much lead you up to God, and acquaint you with him especially in his love and goodness, as the study of Christ, his person, his office, his doctrine, his example, his kingdom, and his benefits. As the deity is your ultimate end, to which all things else are but helps and means; so Christ is that great and principal means, by whom all other means are animated. Remember that you are in continual need of him, for direction, intercession, pardon, sanctification, for support and comfort, and for peace with God. Let no thoughts therefore be so sweet and frequent in your hearts, nor any discourse so ready in your mouths (next to the excellencies of the eternal Godhead) as this of the design of man's redemption. Let Christ be to your souls, as the air, the earth, the sun, and your food are to your bodies, without which your life would presently fail. As you had never come home to the Father but by him, so without him you cannot a moment continue in the Father's love, nor be accepted in one duty, nor be protected from one danger, nor be supplied in any want: for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell; Col. i. 18, 19. "And by him it is, that being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" Rom. v. 1, 2. "And it is in him the head, that we must grow up in all things, from whom the whole body doth receive its increase;" Ephes. iv. 15, 16. You grow no more in grace, than you grow in the true knowledge and daily use of Jesus Christ. But of this I will say no more, because I have said so much in my "Directions for a Sound Conversion."

Direct. VI. 'Let the knowledge and love of God, and your obedience to him, be the works of your religion; and the everlasting fruition of him in heaven, be the continual

end and ruling motive of your hearts and lives, that your very conversation may be with God in heaven.'

You are so far HOLY as you are DIVINE and HEAVENLY. A Christian indeed in casting up his accounts, being certain that this world doth make no man happy, hath been led by Christ to seek a happiness with God above. If you live not for this everlasting happiness, if you trade not for this, if this be not your treasure, your hope and home, the chief matter of your desires, love and joy, and if all things be not pressed to serve it, and despised when they stand against it, you live not indeed a Christian life. GOD and HEAVEN, or GOD in HEAVEN, is the life and soul, the beginning and the end, the sum, the all of true religion. And therefore it is that we are directed to lift up our heads and hearts, and begin our prayers with, "Our Father which art in heaven," and end them with ascribing to him, "the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever." It is not the creatures, but God the Creator, that is the Father, the Guide, and the Felicity of souls, and therefore the ultimate End and object of all religious actions and affections. Dwell still upon God, and dwell in heaven, if you would understand the nature and design of Christianity. Take God for all, that is, for God; study after the knowledge of him in all his works; study him in his word; study him in Christ; and never study him, barely to know him, but to know him that you may love him. Take yourselves as dead, when you live not in the love of God; keep still upon your hearts, a lively sense of the infinite difference between him and the creature. Look on all the world as a shadow, and on God as the substance; take the very worst that man can do, to be in comparison of the punishments of God, but as a flea-biting to the sorest death; and take all the dreaming pleasures of the world, to be less in comparison with the joys of heaven, than one lick of honey is to a thousand years' possession of all the felicities on earth. Think not all the pleasures, honours, or riches of the world, to be worthy to be named in comparison of heaven; nor the greatest of men, to be worthy to be once thought on, in comparison of God. As one straw or feather won or lost, would neither much rejoice or trouble you, if all the city or land were yours; so live as men whose eyes are open, and who discern a greater disproportion between the portion of a worldling and a saint.

Let God be your King, your Father, your Master, your Friend, your Wealth, your Joy, your All. Let not a day go over your heads, in which your hearts have no converse with God in heaven. When any trouble overtaketh you on earth, look up to heaven, and remember, that it is there that rest and joy are prepared for believers. When you are under any want, or cross, or sorrow, fetch not your comfort from any hopes of deliverance here on earth, but from the place of your final, full deliverance. If you feel any strangeness and backwardness on your minds to heavenly contemplations, do not make light of them, but presently by faith get up to Christ, who must make your thoughts of heaven familiar, and seek remedy before your estrangedness increase. The soul is in a sad condition, when it cannot fetch comfort and encouragement from heaven; for then it must have none, or worse than none. When the thoughts of heaven will not sweeten all your crosses, and relieve your minds against all the incumbrances of earth, your souls are not in a healthful state; it is time then to search out the cause, and seek a cure, before it come to worse.

There are three great causes of this dark and dangerous state of soul, which make the thoughts of heaven ineffectual and uncomfortable to us, which therefore must be overcome with the daily care and diligence of your whole lives. 1. Unbelief, which maketh you look towards the life to come with doubting and uncertainty; and this is the most common, radical, powerful and pernicious impediment to a heavenly life. 2. The second is, the love of present things, which being the vanity of a poor, low, fleshly mind, the reviving of reason may do much to overcome it; but it is the sound belief of the life to come that must indeed prevail. 3. The third is, the inordinate fear of death, which hath so great advantage in the constitution of our nature, that it is commonly the last enemy which we overcome, (as death itself is the last enemy which Christ overcometh for us). Bend all your strength, and spend your days in striving against these three great impediments of a heavenly conversation; and remember, that so far as you suffer your hearts to retire from heaven, so far they retire from a life of Christianity and peace.

Direct. VII. 'In the work of mortification, let SELF-

DENIAL be the first and last of all your study, care and diligence.'

Understand how much of the fallen, depraved state of man consisteth in the sin of **SELFISHNESS**: how he is sunk into himself, in his fall from the love of God, and of his neighbour; of the public or private good of others: and how this inordinate self-love is now the grand enemy of all true love to God or man; and the root and heart of covetousness, pride, voluptuousness and all iniquity. Let it be your work, therefore, all your days, to mortify it, and watch against it. When you feel yourselves partial in your own cause, and apt to be drawing from others to yourselves, in point of reputation, precedence or gain, and apt to make too great a matter of every word that is spoken against you, or every little wrong that is done you, observe then the pernicious root of selfishness, from whence all this mischief doth proceed. Read more of this in my "Treatise of Self-denial."

Direct. VIII. 'Take your corrupted, fleshly desires, for the greatest enemy of your souls, and let it be every day your constant work to mortify the flesh, and to keep a watch upon your lusts and appetite, and every sense.'

Remember that our senses were not made to govern themselves, but to be governed by right reason; and that God made them at the first to be the ordinary passage of his love and mercy to our hearts, by the means of the creatures which represent or manifest him unto us: but now in the depraved state of man, the senses have cast off the government of reason, and are become the ruling power, and so man is become like the beasts that perish. Remember then, that to be sensual, is to be brutish; and though grace doth not destroy the appetite and sense, yet it subjecteth it to God and reason. Therefore let your appetite be pleased in nothing, but by the allowance of right reason; and think not that you have reason to take any meats, or drink, or sport, merely because your flesh desireth it; but consider, whether it will do you good or hurt, and how it conduceth to your ultimate end. It is a base and sinful state to be in servitude to your appetite and sense; when by using to please it, you have so increased its desires, that now you know not how to deny it, and displease it; when you have taught it to be like a hungry dog or swine, that will never be quiet till his hunger be satisfied; whereas a well-govern-

ed appetite and sense is easily quieted with a rational denial. Rom. viii. 1. 6—8. 13. xiii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. ii. 11. 1 John ii. 16.

Direct. IX. ‘Take heed lest you fall in love with the world, or any thing therein, and lest your thoughts of any place or condition which you either possess or hope for, do grow too sweet and pleasing to you.’

For there is no one perisheth, but for loving some creature more than God; and complacency is the formal act of love. “Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;” 1 John ii. 15. Value all earthly things as they conduce to your Master’s service, or to your salvation; and not as they tend to the pleasing of the flesh. It is the commonest and most dangerous folly in the world, to be eager to have our houses, and lands, and provisions, and every thing about us in the most pleasing and amiable state; when as this is the acknowledged way to hell, and the only poison of the soul. Are you not in more danger of over-loving a pleasing and prosperous condition, than a bitter and vexatious state? And of over-loving riches, honour, and sensual fulness and delights, rather than poverty, reproach and mortification? And do you not know that if ever you be damned, it will be for loving the world too much, and God too little? Is it for nothing that Christ describeth a saint to you as a Lazarus in poverty and sores, and a damned wretch as one that was “clothed in purple and silk, and fared sumptuously every day?” Luke xvi. Did not Christ know what he did when he put the rich man upon this trial, to part with all his worldly riches, and follow Christ for a treasure in heaven? Luke xviii. 22, 23. All things must be esteemed as loss and dung for the knowledge of Christ, and the hopes of heaven if ever you will be saved; Phil. iii. 6—8. You must so live by faith, and not by sight, as not to look at the temporal things which are seen, but at the things eternal which are unseen; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. v. 7, 8. And one that is running in a race for his life, would not so much as turn his head to look back on any one that called to him to stay, or to look aside to any one that would speak with him in his way; thus must we forget the things that are behind, as counting them not worthy a thought, or remembrance, or a look; Phil. iii. 13, 14. If you feel this poi-

son seize upon your hearts, and your condition in the world (or at least your hopes) begin to grow too sweet and pleasing to you, presently make haste to Christ your Physician, and take his antidote, and cast up the poison as you love your souls. You must know no other pleasure in your outward mercies, but as God appeareth in and by them, and as they tend to profit you, and further you in God's service, or to promote your own or others' good, but not as they are provision for the flesh; Rom. xiii. 13, 14. See my book "Of Crucifying the World."

Direct. X. 'Cast not yourselves wilfully upon temptations, but avoid them as far as lawfully you can; and if you are cast upon them unwillingly, resist them resolutely, as knowing that they come to entice you into sin and hell, from God and your everlasting happiness; and therefore be well acquainted with the particular temptations of every company, calling, relation, business, time, place and condition of life; and go always furnished with particular antidotes against them all.'

Strong grace will do no more against strong temptations, than weak grace against weak ones. Temptation is the way to sin, and sin is the way to hell. If you saw the dangerousness of your station, when you cast yourself upon temptations, you would tremble and fly as for your lives. I take that man as almost gone already, who chooseth temptations, or avoideth them not when he may. Especially be acquainted with the diseases and greatest dangers of your soul; and there keep up a constant watch. Are you liable to a gluttonous pleasing of your appetite? avoid the temptation; set not that before you which may be your snare; let a little, and that of the least tempting kind of food, be your ordinary provision. Sit not at the glutton's table (who fareth deliciously every day) if you would escape the glutton's sin and misery. Or if the provision be of other men's disposal, at least rise quickly and begone. Are you inclined to please your appetite in drinking? avoid such strong drink as may tempt your appetite; and avoid the place and company that draweth you to it. Are you inclined to fleshly lust? avoid the presence of such of the other sex as are a temptation to you: look not on them, and talk not of them: but above all, take heed of nearness, and familiarity, and privacy with them, and of all opportunity of sin. When the devil hath

brought the bait to your hand, and telleth you, Now you may sin without any molestation or discovery, you are then in a very dangerous case. Some that think they would not be guilty of the sin, will yet tempt themselves, and delight to have it in their power, and to have the opportunity of sinning, and to come as near it as they dare; and these are gone before they well perceive their danger. So if you are inclined to pride and ambition, avoid the society of those that tempt you to it: come not among superiors and gallants, or such as kindle your ambition. A retired life, in company of mean and humble persons, is fittest for one that hath your disease. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate; Rom. xii. 16.

But if you cannot avoid the temptation, be sure yet to avoid the sin; take it as if you saw and heard the devil himself persuading you to sin, and damn your souls. Abhor the motion, and give not the devil a patient hearing, when you know what he cometh about. Resolution escapeth many a danger, which those are ruined by, who stand disputing and dallying with the tempter. Especially look about you, when the tempter employeth great men, or learned men, or godly men, or nearest friends to be his instruments. And if their subtlety puzzle you, go to the stronger and more experienced Christians for advice and help. "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation;" Matt. vi. 13. xxvi. 41. It is a dreadful thing to think what persons temptations have overthrown! Luke xviii. 13. Heb. vi. 6. How wise, and learned, and excellent men have been outwitted by satan, and sinned like fools, when they have let go their watch. If we be as resolved as Peter, temptations may quickly change our resolutions, if God leave us to ourselves, and we grow presumptuous or secure; and then our very reason will lose its power; and false representations will make things appear to us quite contrary to what indeed they are; and those reasonings will seem probable to us, which at another time we should easily see through as mere deceit. Temptation as it prevaileth, doth damp and cast asleep our graces, and charm and bewitch all the faculties of the soul; 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Direct. XI. 'If it be possible, make choice of such a pastor for the help and guidance of your souls, as is judicious, experienced, humble, holy, heavenly, faithful, diligent, live-

ly, and peaceable, that liveth not in separation from the generality of the sober, godly ministers and Christians where he liveth.'

1. Think not of being sufficient for yourselves, without the help of those whom Christ hath appointed to be watchmen for your souls; Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 24. As you cannot live without the teaching and the grace of Christ; so Christ doth vouchsafe you his teaching and his grace, by the ministry of his own officers, whom he hath appointed to that end and use. It is marvellous to observe, how Christ chose rather to convert men by the preaching and miracles of his apostles than by his own: and how he would not fully convert Paul without the ministry of Ananias, though he spoke to him from heaven himself, and reasoned the case with him against his persecution. And how he would not fully convert Cornelius and his household, without the ministry of Peter, though he sent an angel to direct him to a teacher. Nor would he convert the Ethiopian eunuch without the ministry of Philip; nor the jailor without the ministry of Paul and Silas, though he wrought a miracle to prepare for his conversion; Acts xvi. x. And "Paul must plant, and Apollos must water, before God will give the increase;" 1 Cor. iii. 6. And though all true Christians are taught of God, and must call no man on earth the master of their faith but Christ, (1 Thess. iv. 9. John vi. 45. Matt. xxiii. 8, 9.) yet have they their teachers, fathers and instructors under Christ, who are helpers of their joy, though they have not dominion over their faith, and are overseers, though not lords and owners of the flock, and are ministers of Christ by whom he teacheth, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and ambassadors by whom he beseecheth sinners to be reconciled to God, having committed to them the word of reconciliation; Eph. iv. 11—14. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 15. Acts xx. 28. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 1—4. 2 Cor. v. 18—20. These are labourers together with God upon his husbandry and building; some being master-builders, and others superstructors; 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10. Christ knew the necessity that the infants of his family had of such nurses, and he knew what numbers of such weak ones there would be in comparison of the strong; or else he had never appointed the strong to such an office; and having appointed it, he will keep up the honour of his officers, and will send you his alms, your food,

your physic, your pardon, your privileges, by their hands. If you be drawn by seducers to forsake or neglect the ministry of Christ's officers, you forsake or neglect your helps and mercies, you refuse his grace, you are like infants that scorn their nurses' help, and like subjects who reject all the officers of the king, and like the chickens that forsake the hen; you forsake the school and church of Christ, and may expect to be quickly caught up by the devil, as stragglers that have no defence or guide.

2. Yet is there great difference between one minister or pastor and another, as much as between physicians, lawyers, or men of any other function. And there being no case in the world that you are so much concerned to be careful in, as the instructing, and conduct, and safety of your souls, you have exceeding great reason to take heed whom you choose to commit the care and conduct of your souls to. It is not enough to say, that he is a true ordained minister, and that his administrations are not nullities, any more than to say of an ignorant physician or cowardly captain, that he hath a valid licence or commission; when for all that, if you trust him, it may cost you your lives. Nor is it a wise man's answer to say, 'That God giveth his grace by the worst, as soon as by the best, and by the weakest, as soon as by the strongest, and therefore I need not be so careful in my choice.' For though God have not confined the working of his Spirit to the most excellent means, yet ordinarily, he worketh according to the means he useth; and this both Scripture, reason and daily experience fully prove. God worketh rationally on man as man; that is, as a rational free agent, by moral operation, and not by a mere physical injection of his grace. When we see the man that is made wise unto salvation by mere infusion of wisdom, without a teacher or the study of the word of God, or when we see God work by his word as by a charm, that a few words shall convert a man, though the speaker or hearer understood them not, then we may hearken to this conceit; and then we may think that a heretic may as well teach you the truth as the orthodox, or a schismatic teach you unity and peace as well as a catholic peaceable pastor, or a man that is ignorant of the mysteries of regeneration and holy communion with God, may best teach you that which he knoweth not

himself, and an enemy to piety and charity, may teach you to be pious and charitable, as well as any other. But I need not say much more of this, for all parties would never so strive to have such ministers as they like, and to put out such as they dislike, if they thought not that the difference between ministers and ministers was very great.

See therefore that the guide whom you choose for your souls, be, 1. Judicious ; for an injudicious man may pervert the Scripture, and lead you into error, and heresy, and sin, before you are aware ; as an unskilful coachman may soon overturn you, or an unskilful waterman may drown you. Yea, though he be a zealous, fervent preacher, yet if he be injudicious, he may ignorantly give you poison in your food, as the experience of this age hath lamentably proved.

2. See if possible, that he be an experienced man, that knoweth by experience on himself, not only what it is to be regenerate, and sanctified, and made a new creature, but also how all the combat between the Spirit and the flesh is to be managed, and what are the methods and stratagems of the tempter, and what are the chief helps and defences of the soul, and how they are all to be used ; for it is not harder to be a judicious physician, or lawyer, or soldier, without experience, than a judicious pastor ; and therefore the Holy Ghost commandeth that he be not a novice, or raw, inexperienced Christian ; 1 Tim. iii. 6.

3. See that he be humble ; for if he be puffed up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil ; 1 Tim. iii. 6. And then he will either scorn the labour of the ministry as a drudgery (to preach in season and out of season, to beseech, and exhort, and stoop to the poorest of the flock) ; or else he will “ speak perverse things to draw away disciples after him ; ” (Acts xx. 30.) or he will, as Diotrephes, reject the brethren, as loving himself to have the preeminence ; (2 John ix. 10.) and will oversee the church by constraint, for filthy lucre, as being a lord over God’s heritage ; (1 Pet. v. 2, 3.) See Dr. Hammond on the text.

4. See that he be holy in his life ; for though this be not essential to his office, yet the unholy are inexperienced, yea, and have a secret enmity in their hearts against that holiness which they should daily preach ; and will usually be shewing it in their close, disgracing, discouraging speeches, against that serious piety which they should promote : and

they will neglect most of the personal care of their flock ; and will unpreach by their lives the good which they preach by their tongues, and harden and embolden the people in their sins, and make them believe that they believe not what they preach themselves. Choose not an enemy of holiness to lead you in the way of holiness (a way that he never went himself), nor an enemy of Christ to conduct you in the Christian warfare, when he is a servant of the devil, the world, and flesh, against whom you fight.

5. See that he be of a heavenly mind, or else his doctrine will be unsavoury and dry, and he will be preaching some speculations or barren controversies, instead of heavenly, edifying truth.

6. See that he be faithful and diligent in his ministry, as one that knoweth the worth of souls, and will not sell them or betray them to the devil for filthy lucre or his fleshly ends ; nor make merchandize of them, as desiring rather theirs than them, and preferring their fleece before the safety of the flock ; but one that imitateth the pattern, Acts xx. and in "meekness instructeth those that are opposers ;" 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. 2 Pet. ii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 2. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. 1 Pet. v. 3, 4. 2 Cor. xii. 14.

7. See that he be a lively, serious preacher ; for all will be little enough to keep up a lively seriousness in such dull and frozen hearts as ours : a cold preacher with cold hearts, is like to make cold work. He that speaks senselessly and sleepily about such matters as heaven and hell, doth by the manner of his speech contradict the matter. When hard-heartedness, and security, and deadness, and lethargic drowsiness is the common and dangerous disease of souls, let him that loveth his soul and would not perish by his disease, make use of a physician and remedy that is suited to the cure, and not of one to rock him asleep, or give him an opiate to increase his malady.

8. See also that he be one that is of a truly catholic spirit, not addicted to a sect, nor to divisions in the church, nor one that liveth in a separation or distance from the generality of the godly, sober ministers ; for you take him not for your guide, as separated from the catholic church, but as united to it, and a member of it ; as valuing the judgment of all the church above the judgment of any one pastor, and knowing that you are yourselves to be kept in the unity of

the church, and not seduced into a sect; and that the pastors are to be the bonds and ligaments of the body, that by their help it may grow up in love and unity, and not the dividers of the body; Eph. iv. 13—16. As captains and inferior officers in an army, that are to conduct each soldier in unity with the army, and not to separate, and make every troop or regiment an army by itself, that they may be the petty generals. In a word, read some good visitation sermons, which tell you what a minister must be, and choose, if possible, to live under such a minister; I say, if possible; for I know to many it is not possible. Wives, and children, and servants, (while they are bound) cannot leave their husbands, parents or masters; and strong Christians who are called to do good to others, must prefer that before such advantages to themselves; and many other impediments may deny men such a blessing. But yet I say, undervalue not such a mercy, and neglect it not, where lawfully it may be had, and prefer nothing before it (as a just impediment) which is not really more worth. And remember that divines do commonly resolve the case of the infidel nations of the world, that they are inexcusable in their infidelity, because when they hear that other nations profess to know the way to heaven, they do not in so great a case go over sea and land to inquire after the doctrine which we profess. And if the Tartarians, Indians, and other nations are bound to send to Christian nations for preachers of the Gospel, I only leave you proportionably to measure your case by theirs (allowing for the disproportion); and to consider how far you should deny your worldly profit in removing your habitations, for such helps as your own necessities require.

Direct. XII. ‘Make choice of such Christians for your familiar friends, and the companions of your lives, as are holy, humble, heavenly, serious, mortified, charitable, peaceable, judicious, experienced and fixed in the ways of God; and not of ungodly persons, or proud, self-conceited, censorious, dividing, injudicious, inexperienced, sensual, worldly, opinionative, superficial, lukewarm or unsettled professors.’

The reasons of this Direction you may perceive in what I said under the last. Your company is a matter of exceeding great concernment to you, as one of the greatest helps or hindrances, comforts or discomforts of all your lives, es-

pecially those that you dwell with, and those that you choose for your familiars and bosom friends ; and, therefore, (so far as God's providence doth not forbid you, and make it impossible) choose such as are here described ; or at least, one such for your bosom friend, if you can have acquaintance with no more. It is of unspeakable importance to your salvation, with whom you are associated for most familiar converse. A good companion will teach you what you know not, or remember you of that which you forget, or stir you up when you are dull, or warm you when you are cold, and watch over you and warn you of your danger, and save you from the poison of ill companions. O what a help and delight it is to have a holy, judicious, faithful friend to open your heart to, and to walk with him in the ways of life ! And how exceeding hard it is to escape sin and hell, and get well to heaven, in company and familiarity of the servants of the devil, who are posting unto hell ! Let not your companions be worse than yourselves, lest they make you worse ; but as much wiser and better as you can procure. See Eccles. iv. 9. 12. Psalm xvi. 2. cxix. 63. Prov. xiii. 20.

Direct. XIII. ' Subdue your passions, and abhor all uncharitable principles and practices, and live in love ; maintaining peace in your families, and with your neighbours, but especially in the church of God.'

Love as you would be loved ; yea, love if you would be loved ; for there is no surer way to purchase love : and love because you are so freely loved by that Gôd whose wrath you have so oft deserved : let the thankful feeling of his love in Christ, even turn you wholly into love to God and mán : abhor every thought, and word, and deed, which is contrary to love, and tendeth to the hurt of others ; and hate the backbitings and bitter words of any, which tend to make another odious, and to destroy your love to any one that God commandeth you to love. Allow that moderate passion which is the fruit of love, and tendeth only to do good ; but resist that which inclineth you to hatred or to do evil. The more men wrong you, remember that you are the more watchfully to maintain your love, knowing that these temptations are sent by the devil on purpose to destroy and quench it, and fill your heart with uncharitableness and wrath. Give place to the wrath of others, and stand not resisting it by words or deeds ; Rom. xii. 18—20. " Recompense to

no man evil for evil," in word or action ; ver. 17. Especially be most tender of the union of true Christians, and of the church's peace : when you hear the men of several sects representing one another as odious, understand that it is the language of the devil to draw you from love, into hatred and divisions ; and when you must speak odiously of men's sin, speak charitably of their persons, and be as ready to speak of the good that is in them, as of the evil. Believe not that dividing, ungrounded doctrine, which telleth you that you cannot sufficiently disown the error of any party in doctrine, and worship, and discipline, without a separation or withdrawing from their communion ; and which telleth you that you are guilty of the ministerial faults of every pastor that you join with, or of the faults of all that worship which you are present at (which would first separate you from every worshipping society and person upon earth, and then lead you to give over the worshipping of God yourselves). You must love Christians as Christians, though they have errors and faults repugnant to their Christianity. And you must join in worship with Christians as Christians, though their worship hath errors and faults repugnant to the right order and manner of worship ; so be it you join not in that worship which is substantially evil, and such as God doth utterly disown ; or that you commit no actual sin yourselves, or that you approve not of the errors and faults of the worshippers, and justify not their smallest sin ; or that you prefer not defective, faulty worship before that which is more pure and agreeable to the will of God. For while all the worshippers are faulty and imperfect, all their worship will be so too : and if your actual sin when you pray or preach defectively yourselves, doth not signify that you approve your faultiness, much less will your presence prove that you allow of the faultiness of others. The business that you come upon is to join with a Christian congregation in the use of those ordinances which God hath appointed, supposing that the ministers and worshippers will all be sinfully defective, in method, order, words, or circumstances : and to bear with that which God doth bear with, and not to refuse that which is God's for the adherent faults of men, no more than you will refuse every dish of meat which is unhandsomely cooked, as long as there is no poison in it, and you prefer it

not before better ; 1 Cor. i. 10. iii. 1—3. xi. 17, 18. 21. Rom. xv. 1, 2.

Direct. XIV. ‘Keep up a constant government over your thoughts and tongues, especially against those particular sins which you are most strongly tempted to, and which you see other Christians most overtaken with.’

Keep your thoughts employed upon something that is good and profitable ; either about some useful truths, or about some duty to God or man, of your general or particular calling ; yea, about all these in their several seasons : learn how to watch your thoughts, and stop them at their first excursions ; and how to quicken them and make them serviceable to every grace, and every duty. You can never improve your solitary hours, if you have not the government of your thoughts.

And as the thoughts must be governed, because they are the first and intimate actings of good or evil ; so the tongue must be governed as the first expresser of the mind, and the first instrument of good or hurt to others. Especially take heed of these sins which the faultiness of most professors of religion doth warn you to avoid. 1. An ordinary course of vain jesting, and unprofitable talk. 2. Provoking, passionate, inconsiderate words, that tend to kindle wrath in others. 3. Backbiting, censuring, and speaking evil of others without any just call, when it is either upon uncertain reports, or uncharitable suspicion, or tendeth more to hurt than good. 4. A forward venting of our own conceits, and a confident pleading for our uncertain, unproved opinions in religion, and a contentious wrangling for them, as if the kingdom of God lay in them. And a forwardness in all company to be the speakers rather than the hearers, and to talk in a magisterial, teaching way, as if we took ourselves to be the wisest, and others to have need to learn of us. But especially take heed of speaking evil of those that have wronged you, or of those that differ from you in some tolerable opinions in religion : and hate that devilish, uncharitable vice, which maketh many ready to believe any thing, or say any thing, be it never so false, of those that are against their sect ; yea, of whole parties of men that differ from them, when there is not one of a thousand of all the party that ever they were acquainted with, or ever could prove the thing by, of which they are accused. By the means of these bold, uncharita-

ble reports, the devil hath unspeakably gained against Christ; and the kingdom of malice hath won upon the kingdom of love: and most Christians are easier known to be factious, by hating and slandering one another, than they can be known to be Christ's disciples, by loving one another. And while every sect, without remorse, doth speak reproachfully and hatefully of the rest, they learn hereby to hate one another, and harden the infidel and ungodly world, in hating and speaking evil of them all; so that a Turk or heathen need no other witness of the odiousness of all Christians, than the venomous words which they speak against each other. And as foul words in quarrels prepare for blows, so these malicious invectives, upon differences in religion, prepare for the cruellest persecutions.

From my own observation, which with a grievous soul I have made in this generation, I hereby give warning to this and all succeeding ages, that if they have any regard to truth or charity, they take heed how they believe any factious, partial historian or divine, in any evil that he saith of the party which he is against: for (though there be good and credible persons of most parties, yet) you shall find that passion and partiality prevaileth against conscience, truth and charity, in most that are sick of this disease. And that the envious zeal which is described, James iii. doth make them think they do God service; first, in believing false reports, and then in venting them against those that their zeal or faction doth call the enemies of truth; so that there is little credit to be given to their reproaches, farther than some better evidence is brought to prove the thing. Nay, it would astonish a man to read the impudent lies which I have often read, obtruded upon the world with such confidence, that the reader will be tempted to think, 'Surely all this cannot be false.' Yea, about public words or actions, where you would think that the multitude of witnesses would deter them from speaking it, if it were not true; and yet all as false as tongue can speak. Therefore believe not pride, or faction, or malice in any evil that it saith, unless you have better evidence of the truth.

Most Christian is that advice of Dr. H. More, 'That all parties of Christians would mark all the good which is in other parties, and be more forward to speak of that than of the evil.' And this would promote the work of charity in

the church, and the interest of Christianity in the world : whereas the overlooking of all that is good, and aggravating all the evil (and falsely feigning more than is true) is the work of greatest service to the devil, and of greatest enmity to Christianity and love, that I know commonly practised in the world. Keep your tongues from all such hellish work as this.

Direct. XV. ‘ Let every state of life and relation that you are in, be sanctified unto God, and conscionably used. And to that end understand the advantages and duties of every condition and relation, and the sins, and hindrances, and dangers which you are most liable to.’

The duties of our relations are a great part of the work of a Christian’s life. As magistrates and subjects, pastors and flocks, parents and children, husband and wife, masters and servants ; as superiors in gifts or places, or inferiors or equals ; as neighbours or companions ; in our teaching and learning, ruling and obeying, buying and selling. Be conscionable in all these which are your own relations, if you will live as Christians, and be acceptable unto God. An ungodly, or oppressing magistrate ; a murmuring, rebellious subject ; an ungodly, negligent, or factious pastor ; an unteachable, refractory, ungodly flock ; a husband, parent, or master, without religion, love, or justice ; a wife, a child, a servant, without love, and dutiful obedience, and faithful diligence ; a proud, contemptuous superior ; a malicious, censorious inferior ; an unjust, uncharitable neighbour ; a deceitful buyer or seller, borrower or lender, and a self-seeking friend, and seducing, unprofitable companion, are all as far from pleasing God by the rest of their works or profession of religion, as they are from being obedient to his will. They provoke him to abhor their prayers and profession, and to tell them that he will rather have obedience than sacrifice. If you are false to men, you are not true to God. It is he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, that is accepted of him. And the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Direct. XVI. ‘ Live as those that have all their powers, receivings, and opportunities to do good with in the world ; and must be answerable how they have improved all. And as those that believe, that the more good they do, the more

they do receive, and the greater is the honour, the profit, and the pleasure of their lives.'

To do no harm, is an honour which is common to a stone, or a clod of clay, with the most innocent man. If this were all the excellency that you aim at, it were better that you had never been born; for then you would certainly have done no harm. Remember, that to do good is the highest imitation of God, supposing that it proceeded from holy love, and be done to the pleasing and glorifying of God, that the principle and the end be suitable to the work. Remember who hath told you, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," (Acts xx. 35.), and hath promised, that "he that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (supposing that he have no better to give); Matt. x. 41, 42. "Give to every man that asketh of thee (according to thy ability). Give, and it shall be given to you;" Luke vi. 30. 38. xii. 33. Take that day or hour as lost, in which you do no good (directly or preparatorily). And take that part of your estate as lost, with which (directly or remotely) you do no good. Remember how the judgment must pass on you at last, according to the improvement of your several talents; Matt. xxv. When your time is past, and your estates are gone, or your understandings, or your strength decayed, and your power and greatness is levelled with the poorest, it will be an unspeakable comfort to you, if you are able to say, 'We laid them out sincerely to our master's use;' and an unspeakable terror for you to say, 'They were lost and cast away on the service of the flesh.' If therefore, you are rulers, and are intrusted with power, study how to do all the good with your power that possibly you can. If you are ministers of Christ, lay out your time, and strength, and parts, in doing good to the souls of all about you; study how you may be most serviceable to the church and cause of Christ. If you are rich men, study how to do all the good with your riches that possibly you can do (not violating the order appointed you by God). In your

neighbourhoods, and in all your families and relations, study to do the greatest good you can. Take it thankfully as a great mercy to yourselves, when opportunity to do good is offered you. And content not yourselves to do a little, while you are able to do more. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit, reap everlasting life. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;" Gal. vi. 7—10. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver;" 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. "To do good, and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices, God is well-pleased;" Heb. xiii. 16. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained, that we should walk in them;" Ephes. iii. 10. Let doing good be the business and employment of your lives; preferring still the public good, before the private good of any; and the good of men's souls before that of the body; but yet neglecting none, but doing the lesser, in order to the greater.

Object. 'But I am a poor obscure person, that have neither abilities of mind, or body, or estate; and what good can I do?'

Ans. There is no rational person that is not intrusted with one talent at the least (Matt. xxv.), and that is not in a capacity of doing good in the world, if they have but hearts, and be but willing. If you had neither money to give, nor tongues to speak for God, and to provoke others to do good, yet a holy, humble, heavenly, patient, blameless life, is a powerful means of doing good, by shewing the excellency of grace, and convincing the ungodly, and stopping the mouths of the enemies of piety, and honouring the ways of God in the world. Such a holy, harmless, exemplary life, is a continual, and a powerful sermon. And for giving, if there be first a "willing mind, it is accepted according to that a

man hath, and not according to that he hath not;" 2 Cor. viii. 12. If you are unfeignedly willing to give, if you had it, God taketh it as done. What you would have given, is set down on your account as given indeed. The widow's two mites were praised by Christ as a bountiful gift, and a cup of cold water is not unrewarded to the willing soul. No one, therefore, is excusable that liveth unprofitably in the world. But yet, men of power, and parts, and wealth, have the greatest reckoning to make. Their ten talents must have a proportionable improvement. It is a great deal of good that they must do. "For to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more;" Luke xii. 48.

Direct. XVII. 'Redeem your time, and highly value every minute; and spare for no labour in the work of your salvation. Dream not of an easy, idle, sluggish life, as sufficient to your high and glorious ends; and rest not in a customary and outside way of duty, without regard to the life, and the success.'

If any thing in all the world require all our power and time, it is that for which all our powers and time are given us; and which we are sure will a thousandfold recompense us for all. O what a sottish kind of stupidity is it, for a man to trifle in the way to eternity, that hath an endless life of joy or sorrow, depending on the preparations of so short a life. How little doth he know the worth of his soul, the joys of heaven, the terrors of hell, the malicious diligence of satan, or the difficulty of salvation, that can idle, and play away whole hours of time; and pray as if he prayed not, and seem to be religious when he is not in good earnest! And bestirreth not himself so much to escape hell-fire, and to obtain everlasting joys with Christ, as he would do to escape a temporal death or misery, or to obtain some dignity or riches in the world; 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. O, therefore, as ever you care what becometh of your souls, and as ever you will have comfort in the review of your present life, make not a jest of heaven and hell; trifle not in your race and warfare; dally not with God and conscience; play not, and dream not away your time. Know the worth of an hour's time, for the sake of your work, and of your souls, as it is commonly

known by dying men. But of this I have spoke already in my "Now or Never," and "A Saint or a Brute," and in the third part of the "Saint's Rest."

Direct. XVIII. 'Sit down and count what it may cost you to be Christians indeed, and to be saved. Reckon not on prosperity, or a cheap religion, but resolve to take up the cross, and follow Christ in suffering, and to be crucified to the world, and by many tribulations, to enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Luke xiv. 26—28. 30. 33. Gal. vi. 14. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Thess. iii. 4. 2 Thess. i. 6—8. Mal. v. 10—12. 2 Tim. iii. 12.

All that will live godly in Christ, shall suffer persecution. It is not all that are baptized and called Christians, but all that will live godly in Christ Jesus. It is godliness, and not the bare name of Christianity, which the serpent's seed have so great an enmity to. I have elsewhere cited an excellent saying of Dr. Thomas Jackson's, to prove that this is to be expected under Christian, as well as heathen, governments, and that it is not through the goodness of the great ones of the world, but the cowardliness of our hearts, that the ministers of Christ are not ordinarily martyrs. Though God may possibly exempt you from any notable suffering for his cause, yet it is not wise or safe to expect such an exemption; for that will hinder your preparation for suffering. And a mind prepared to suffer, is essential to true Christianity. And no man that is not a martyr in resolution and disposition can be saved. If the fiery trial come upon you, let it not seem a strange, unexpected thing; 1 Pet. iv. 12—14. 17. When persecution ariseth because of the word, the unrooted, unsound, unsettled Christian, is presently offended, and falls away; Matt. xiii. 21. Mark iv. 17. Then they will fall to distinguishing and carnal reasoning, and prove any thing lawful which is necessary to their peace. "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;" Gal. vi. 12. Shrink not for sufferings. "Fear not them that can but kill the body;" Luke xii. 4. Never doth the Spirit of God and glory so much rest upon believers, as in their greatest "sufferings for righteousness sake," (1 Pet. iv. 14.) and never have they cause of more "exceeding joy;" Matt. v. 11, 12. Prosperity doth not so well agree with a life of

faith, as sufferings and adversity. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the (temporal) things which are seen, but at the things (eternal) which are not seen;" 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Read Rom. viii. 33, to the end.

Direct. XIX. 'If you fall into any sin, rise speedily by a thorough repentance; and take heed both of delay, and of a palliative cure;' Luke xiii. 3, 5. xxii. 32.

Take heed of trusting to a general repentance, or a converted state, instead of a particular repentance and conversion from any known sin, especially which is more than the ordinary unavoidable infirmities of a saint. For it is not general repentance indeed, which reacheth not to every known particular. If temptation have cast you down, take heed of lying there, but presently get up again. What the apostle saith of wrath (Eph. iv. 26.), the same I may say of other falls, "Let not the sun go down upon them." But go out with Peter, and weep with him, if you have sinned with him. If your bones be out of joint, or broken, get them set presently, before they settle in their dislocation; and let the cure be thorough, and spare not for a little pain at first. Let as open confession as the case requireth, and as full restitution, signify the sincerity of your repentance. For a gentle handling of yourselves may undo you; and palliation is the hypocrite's cure. O take heed lest you presume to sleep one night in your unrepented sins; and take heed, lest delay encourage your tempter to offer you the bait again and again, and to say, 'Why not once more? Why may you not be as well pardoned for twice as for once; and for thrice as for twice?' &c. It is dangerous playing or sleeping at the brink of hell. Away from the temptation and occasion of your sin; stand not disputing, but resolve and begone; and "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you;" John v. 14. Stick not, man, at the shame, or loss, or suffering, which confession, restitution, or reformation may bring; but remember that you can never escape damnation at too dear a rate. This is Christ's meaning, when he speaketh of cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye, if it offend; that is, ensnare and tempt you unto sin; Matt. v. 29, 30. Not that you should do so indeed, for you have an easier way to avoid your sin; but that this is far the

lesser of the two evils, to lose a hand or eye, than to lose the soul, and, therefore, to be chosen if there were no other remedy. If the thief had no other way to forbear stealing, than to cut off his hand; or the fornicator to cure his lust, than to put out his eyes, it were a cheap remedy. A cheap and easy superficial repentance, may skin over the sore and deceive a hypocrite; but he that would be sure of pardon, and free from fear, must go to the bottom.

Direct. XX. 'Live as with death continually in your eye, and spend every day in serious preparation for it, that when it cometh, you may find your work dispatched; and may not then cry out in vain to God to try you once again.'

Promise not yourselves long life: think not of death as at many years' distance, but as hard at hand. Think what will then be needful to your peace and comfort, and order all your life accordingly, and prepare that now, which will be needful then. Live now while you have time, as you will resolve and promise God to live, when on your deathbed you are praying for a little time of trial more. It is a great work to die in joyful assurance and hope of everlasting life, and with a longing desire to depart and be with Christ as best of all; Phil. i. 21. 23. O then what a burden and terror it will be, to have an unbelieving, or a worldly heart, or a guilty conscience. Now therefore use all possible diligence to strengthen faith, to increase love, to be acquitted from guilt, to be above the world, to have the mind set free from the captivity of the flesh, to walk with God, and to obtain the deepest, most delectable apprehensions of his love in Christ, and of the heavenly blessedness which you expect. Do you feel any doubts of the state of immortality, or staggering at the promise of God through unbelief? Presently do all you can to conquer them, and get a clear resolution to your souls, and leave it not all to do at the time of sickness. Are the thoughts of God and heaven unpleasant or terrible to you? Presently search out the cause of all, and labour in the cure of it as for your lives. Is there any former or present sin, which is a burden or terror to your consciences? Presently seek out to Christ for a cure by faith and true repentance; and do that to disburden your consciences now, which you would do on a sick bed; and leave not so great and necessary a work, to so uncertain, and short, and unfit a time. Is there any thing in this world that is sweeter to

your thoughts than God and heaven; and which you cannot willingly let go? Mortify it without delay, considering of its vanity; compare it with heaven; crucify it by the cross of Christ; cease not till you account it loss and dung, for the excellent knowledge of Christ and life eternal; Phil. iii. 7—9. Let not death surprise you as a thing that you never seriously expected. Can you do no more in preparation for it, than you do? If not, why do you wish at death to be tried once again? And why are you troubled that you lived no better? But if you can, when think you should it be done? Is the time of uncertain, painful sickness better than this? O how doth sensuality besot the world! and inconsiderateness deprive them of the benefit of their reason! O sirs, if you know indeed that you must shortly die, live then as dying men should live: choose your condition in the world, and manage it as men should do that must shortly die. Use your power, and command, and honour, and use all your neighbours, and especially use the cause and servants of Christ, as men should do that must shortly die. Build and plant, and buy and sell, and use your riches, as those that must die, remembering that the fashion of all these things is passing away; 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Yea, pray and read, and hear and meditate, as those that must die. Seeing you are as sure of it as if it were this hour; in the name of God delay not your preparations. It is a terrible thing for an immortal soul to pass out of the body in a carnal, unregenerate, unprepared state, and to leave a world which they loved and were familiar with, and go to a world which they neither know nor love, and where they have neither heart nor treasure; Matt. vi. 19—21. The measure of faith which may help you to bear an easy cross, is not sufficient to fortify and encourage your souls, to enter upon so great a change. So also bear all your wants and crosses as men that must shortly die: fear the cruelties of men, but as becometh those that are ready to die. He that can die well, can do any thing, or suffer any thing: and he that is unready to die, is unfit for a fruitful and comfortable life. What can rationally rejoice that man, who is sure to die, and is unready to die, and is yet unfurnished of dying comforts? Let nothing be now sweet to you, which will be bitter to your dying thoughts. Let nothing be much desired now, which will be unprofitable and uncomfortable then. Let

nothing seem very heavy or grievous now, which will be light and easy then. Let nothing now seem honourable, which will then seem despicable and vile. Consider of every thing as it will look at death, that when the day shall come which endeth all the joys of the ungodly, you may look up with joy, and say, 'Welcome heaven; this is the day which I so long expected, which all my days were spent in preparation for, which shall end my fears, and begin my felicity, and put me into possession of all that I desired, and prayed, and laboured for, when my soul shall see its glorified Lord. For he hath said, John xii. 26. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Even so Lord Jesus, remember me now thou art in thy kingdom, and let me be with thee in paradise; Luke xxiii. 42, 43. O thou that spakest those words so full of inexpressible comfort, to a sinful woman in the first speech after thy blessed resurrection; John xx. 17. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Take up now this soul that is thine own, that it may see the glory given thee with the Father; (John xvii. 24.) and instead of this life of temptation, trouble, darkness, distance, and sinful imperfection, I may delightfully behold, and love, and praise thy Father and my Father, and thy God and my God. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Lord Jesus receive my spirit;' Luke ii. 29. Acts vii. 59.

And now I have given you all these Directions, I shall only request you in the close, that you will set your very hearts to the daily, serious practice of them; for there is no other way for a ripe, confirmed state of grace: and as ever you regard the glory of God, the honour of your religion, the welfare of the church and those about you, and the living and dying comforts of yourselves; O do not sluggishly rest in an infant state of grace! Did you but know how a weak and strong faith differ, and how a weak and a sound, confirmed Christian differ, as to the honour of God, and the good of others, and especially to themselves, both in life and death, it would quickly awaken you to a cheerful diligence, for so high and excellent an end. Did you but well

understand the wrong that Christ and the Gospel have sustained in the world, yea, in England, by weak, diseased, dis-tempered Christians, your hearts would bleed, and with shame and grief, it would be your secret and open lamentation. Stir up then the grace that is given you, and use Christ's means, and do your best, and you will find that Christ is not an insufficient Physician, nor an uneffectual Saviour, or an empty Fountain ; but that he is filled with all the fulness of God, and hath spirit and life to communicate to his members ; (Zech. xii. 8.) and that there is no want which he cannot supply, and no corruption or temptation which his grace is not sufficient to overcome ; John iv. 14. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Rom. vi. 4. 6. Col. iii. 1, 3, 4.

END OF DIRECTIONS TO THE CONVERTED FOR THEIR ESTABLISHMENT, GROWTH AND PERSEVERANCE.

THE CHARACTER
OF
A SOUND, CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN ;
AS ALSO
OF A WEAK CHRISTIAN,
AND
OF A SEEMING CHRISTIAN.

WRITTEN TO IMPRINT UPON MEN'S MINDS THE TRUE IDEA OR
CONCEPTION OF GODLINESS AND CHRISTIANITY.

1870

1870

1870

1870

1870

THE

PREFACE ;

DIRECTED TO MY WORTHY FRIEND, HENRY ASHURST, ESQ.
CITIZEN OF LONDON.

DEAR AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

WHEN this book was printed and passing into the world, without the ordinary ornament of a prefixed honoured name, my thoughts reduced me into the common way, though not upon the common reasons; assuring me that your name would be more than an accident or ceremony to such a discourse as this; even a part more substantial than a map is in a treatise of geography, or the well-cut figures in tractates of anatomy. Discourses of navigation, architecture, music, &c. may almost as hopefully instruct the learners, without any visible operations or effects, as the characters of well-tempered Christians can duly inform the minds of ignorant, ungodly men, of so divine a thing as Christianity and godliness, without acquaintance with some such persons, in whom these characters are manifestly exemplified. Wise and holy precepts, are to make wise and holy persons: it is such persons as well as such precepts which bear the image of God; which indeed is most perfect in exactness and integrity in the precepts; (for in them is no imperfection or error, as they are of God;) but it is of greater final excellency, in activity and usefulness as it is in men. And therefore as God delighteth in his servants, and is glorified in and by them in the world, so satan usually chooseth such persons, to reproach and make odious to the ignorant, rather than the holy precepts immediately, by which they are directed; both because their holiness is most

exasperating by activity ; and also most liable to calumny and contempt, through imperfection, and mixture of that which indeed is worthy of dislike. Till godliness and Christianity be visible in full perfection, and elevated above the contradiction of folly, and the contempt of pride, the blind, distracted minds of hardened, forsaken sinners, will not acknowledge its divine, celestial nature and worth ; but then it will be too late to become partakers of it : they must both know and possess it in its infancy and minority, who will ever enjoy it in its heavenly dignity and glory. If seasonable illumination and conversion confute not the deceits and slanders which pride and ignorance have entertained, the too late confutation of them by death and their following experience, will make them wish, that they had been wise at cheaper rates, when it will be in vain to cry, " Give us of your oil, for our lamps are out ;" Matt. xxv. 8.

But while I offer your name to the malicious world, as an instance of the temper which I here describe, I intend it not as a singular though an eminent instance : for through the great mercy of God, there are thousands of examples of confirmed Christians among us in this land, even before those eyes that will not see them. But it is not catalogues, but single names, which writers have used in this way. And why may I not take the advantage of custom, to leave to the world the testimony of my estimation and great respects, to so deserving a person of the primitive Christian, catholic temper : and to let them know, what sort of men were my most dear and faithful friends ? And also thus to express my love, by telling you closely what you must be, as well as by telling the world for their example what you are ? Upon these accounts, without your knowledge or consent, I presume thus to prefix your name to this treatise, written long ago, but now published by

Your faithful Friend,

RICHARD BAXTER.

From my Lodging in New Prison,
June 14, 1669.

TO THE READER.

READERS,

IT is a matter of a greater moment than I can express, what idea or image of the nature of godliness and Christianity is imprinted upon men's minds : the description which is expressed in the sacred Scriptures, is true and full : the thing described is rational, pure, perfect, unblamable and amiable. That which is expressed in the lives of the most, is nothing so ; but is purblind, defiled, maimed, imperfect, culpable, and mixed with so much of the contrary quality, that to them that cannot distinguish the chaff from the wheat, the sickness from the life, it seemeth an unreasonable, fanciful, loathsome and vexatious thing, and so far from being worthy to be preferred before all the riches, honours and pleasures of the world, that it seemeth worthy to be kept under as a troubler of kingdoms, societies and souls. And doubtless this monstrous expression of it in men's lives, is because the perfect expression of it in God's word hath not made a true impression upon the mind, and consequently upon the heart. For as it is sound doctrine which must make sound Christians, so doctrine worketh on the will and affections, not as it is in itself, and as delivered, but as it is understood, believed, remembered, considered ; even as it is imprinted on the mind, and used by it. And as interposed matter, or defective application may cause the image on the wax to be imperfect, though made by the most perfect seal ; so is it in this case, when one man doth defectively understand the Scripture description of a godly man or Christian, and another by misunderstanding mixeth false conceptions of his own ; and another by a corrupt, depraved will doth hinder the understanding from believing, or remembering, or considering and using what it partly apprehendeth ; what

wonder if the godliness and Christianity in their hearts be unlike the godliness and Christianity in the Scriptures? When the law of God, in nature and Scripture is pure and uncorrupt, and the law of God written imperfectly on the heart, is there mixed with the carnal law in their members, no marvel if it be expressed accordingly in their lives.

I have therefore much endeavoured in all my writings, and especially in this, to draw out the full portraiture of a Christian or godly man indeed, and to describe God's image on the soul of man, in such a manner as tendeth to the just information of the reader's mind, and the filling up of the wants, and rectifying the errors which may be found in his former conceptions of it. And I do purposely inculcate the same things oft, in several writings (as when I preached I did in all my sermons) that the reader may find that I bring him not undigested, needless novelties, and that the frequent repetition of them may help to make the deeper and fuller impression: for my work is to subserve the Holy Ghost, in putting God's law into men's hearts, and writing it out truly, clearly, and fully upon their inward parts; that they may be made such themselves, by understanding thoroughly what they must be, and what a solid Christian is: and that thus they may be born again by the incorruptible, immortal seed, the word of God, which will live and abide for ever; and may purify their souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit; 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. 25. He is the best lawyer, physician, soldier, &c. who hath his doctrine in his brain, and not only in his books, and hath digested his reading into an intellectual system and habit of knowledge. If ministers had a hundred times over repeated the integral portraiture or character of a sound Christian, till it had been as familiar to the minds and memories of their hearers, as is the description of a magistrate, a physician, a schoolmaster, a husbandman, a shepherd, and such things as they are well acquainted with, it would have been a powerful means to make sound Christians. But when men's minds conceive of a Christian, as a man that differeth from heathens and infidels, in nothing but holding the Christian opinions, and using different words and ceremonies of worship, and such like, no wonder if such be but opinionative, lifeless Christians: and if their religion make them no better than a Seneca or Plutarch, I shall never believe that they are any surer to be saved than they. And

such a sort of men there are, that suppose Christianity to consist but of these three parts. 1. The Christian doctrine acknowledged (which they call faith). 2. The orders and ordinances of the Christian church and worship, submitted to, and decently used, (which they call godliness). And 3. The heart and life of a Cato, Cicero, or Socrates adjoined ; but all that goeth beyond this, (which is the life of Christianity and godliness, a lively faith, and hope, and love ; a heavenly and holy mind and life, from the renewing, indwelling Spirit of God, which is described in this treatise) they are strangers to it, and take it to be but fancy and hypocrisy. These no Christians do much to reduce the church to infidelity ; that there may be indeed no Christians in the world. For my part I must confess, if there were no better Christians in the world than these, I think I should be no Christian myself : and if Christ made men no better than the religion of Socrates, Cato, or Seneca, and did no more to the reparation and perfecting of men's hearts and lives, I should think no better of the Christian religion than of theirs ; for the means is to be estimated by the end and use : and that is the best physician that hath the remedies which are fittest to work the cure. If God had not acquainted me with a sort of men that have really more holiness, mortification, spirituality, love to God, and to one another, and even to enemies, and more heavenly desires, expectations and delights, than these men before described have, it would have been a very great hindrance to my faith.

The same may I say of those that place godliness and Christianity only in holding strict opinions, and in affected, needless singularities, and in the fluent oratory and length of prayer, and avoiding other men's forms and modes of worship, and in any thing short of a renewed, holy, heavenly heart and life.

And undoubtedly, if a true, full character of godliness had been imprinted in their minds, we should never have seen the professors of it so blotted with sensuality, selfishness, pride, ambition, worldliness, distrust of God, self-conceitedness, heresy, schism, rebellions, unquietness, impatience, unmercifulness, and cruelty to men's souls and bodies, as we have seen them in this age ; and all this justified as consistent with religion.

And I fear, that because this treatise will speak to few

that are not some way guilty, every face which hath a spot or blemish will be offended with the glass ; and lest the faulty will say, that I particularly intended to disgrace them : but I must here tell the reader, to prevent his misunderstanding, that if he shall imagine that I have my eyes upon particular parties, and, as a discontented person, do intend to blame those that differ from myself, or to grieve inferiors, or dishonour and asperse superiors, they will mistake me, and wrong themselves, and me, who professedly intend but the true description of sound Christians, diseased Christians, and seeming Christians.

And for the manner of this writing, I am conscious it hath but little to commend it. The matter is that for which it is published. The Lord Verulam, in his essays, truly saith, that “ much reading makes one full, much discourse doth make one ready, and much writing doth make a man exact.” Though I have had my part of all these means, yet being parted five years from my books, and three years from my preaching, the effects may decay ; and you must expect neither quotations or oratory testimonies, or ornaments of style : but having not yet wholly ceased from writing, I may own so much of the exactness, as will allow me to entreat the reader, not to use me as many have done, who by overlooking some one word, have made the sense another thing, and have made it a crime to be exact in writing, because they cannot or will not be exact in reading, or charitable or humane in interpreting.

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE CHARACTER
OF
A SOUND, CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN,
AND
OF A WEAK CHRISTIAN,
AND
OF A SEEMING CHRISTIAN.

PART II.
OF THE DIRECTIONS FOR WEAK CHRISTIANS.

IN the explication of the text, which I made the ground of the foregoing discourse, I have shewed you that there is a degree of grace to be expected and sought after by all true Christians, which putteth the soul into a sound, confirmed, radicated state, in comparison of that weak, diseased, tottering condition, which most Christians now continue in. And I have shewed you how desirable a state that is, and what calamities follow the languishing, unhealthful state, even of such as may be saved. And indeed did we but rightly understand how deeply the errors and sins of many well-meaning Christians have wounded the interest of religion in this age; and how heinously they have dishonoured God, and caused the enemies of holiness to blaspheme, and hardened thousands in popery and ungodliness, in probability to their perdition: had we well observed when God's judgments have begun, and understood what sins have caused our wars, and plagues, and flames, and worse than all these, our great heart-divisions, and church-distractions and convulsions; we should ere this have given over the flattering of ourselves and one another, in such a heaven-provoking state; and the ostentation of that little goodness, which

hath been eclipsed by such lamentable evils. And instead of these, we should have betaken ourselves to the exercise of such a serious, deep repentance as the quality of our sins, and the greatness of God's chastisements do require. It is a doleful case, to see how light many make of all the rest of their distempers, when once they think that they have so much grace and mortification, as is absolutely necessary to save their souls; and expect that preachers should say little to weak Christians, but words of comfort, setting forth their happiness. And yet if one of them, when he hath the gout, or stone, or cholic, or dropsy, doth send for a physician, he would think himself derided or abused, if his physician, instead of curing his disease, should only comfort him, by telling him, that he is not dead. What excellent disputations have Cicero and Seneca, the Platonists and Stoics, to prove that virtue is of itself sufficient to make man happy? And yet many Christians live as if holiness were but the way and means to their felicity, or at best but a small part of their felicity itself; or as if felicity itself grew burdensome, or were not desirable in this life; or a small degree of it were as good as a greater.

And too many mistake the will of God, and the nature of sanctification, and place their religion in the hot prosecution of those mistakes. They make a composition of error and passion, and an unyielding stiffness in them, and siding with the church or party which maintaineth them, and an uncharitable censuring those that are against them, and an unpeaceable contending for them; and this composition they mistake for godliness, especially if there be but a few drachms of godliness and truth in the composition, though corrupted and overpowered by the rest.

For these miscarriages of many well-meaning, zealous persons, the land mourneth, the churches groan; kingdoms are disturbed by them; families are disquieted by them; godliness is hindered, and much dishonoured by them; the wicked are hardened by them, and encouraged to hate, and blaspheme, and oppose religion; the glory of the Christian faith is obscured by them; and the infidel, Mahometan, and heathen world, are kept from faith in Jesus Christ, and many millions of souls destroyed by them. I mean by the miscarriages of the weaker sort of Christians, and by the wicked lives of those carnal hypocrites, who for custom or worldly

interest, do profess that Christianity which was never received by their hearts.

And all this is much promoted by their indiscretion, who are so intent upon the consolatory opening of the safety and happiness of believers, that they omit the due explication of their description, their dangers, and their duties.

One part of this too much neglected work I have endeavoured to perform in the foregoing treatise: another I shall attempt in this second part. There are five degrees or ranks of true Christians observable. 1. The weakest Christians, who have only the essentials of Christianity, or very little more: as infants that are alive, but of little strength or use to others. 2. Those that are lapsed into some wounding sin, though not into a state of damnation; like men at age, who have lost the use of some one member for the present, though they are strong in other parts. 3. Those that have the integral parts of Christianity in a considerable measure, are in a sound and healthful state, though neither perfect, nor of the highest form or rank of Christians in this life, nor without such infirmities, as are the matter of their daily watchfulness and humiliation. 4. Those that are so strong as to attain extraordinary degrees of grace, who are therefore comparatively called perfect, as Matt. v. 45. 5. Those that have an absolute perfection without sin; that is, the heavenly inhabitants.

Among all these, it is the third sort or degree which I have here characterised, and upon the bye, the first sort, and the hypocrite. I meddle not now with the lapsed Christian as such, nor with those giants in holiness of extraordinary strength; nor with the perfect, blessed souls in heaven. But it is the Christian who hath attained that confirmation in grace, and composed, quiet, fruitful state, which we might ordinarily expect, if we were industrious, whose image and character I shall now present you with. I call him oftentimes a Christian indeed, in allusion to Christ's description of Nathaniel (John i. 47.), and as we commonly use that word, for one that answereth his own profession without any notable dishonour or defect; as we say such a man is a scholar indeed; and not as signifying his mere sincerity. I mean one whose heart and life are so conformed to the principles, the rule, and the hopes of Christianity, that to the honour of Christ, the true nature of our religion is discern-

ible in his conversation; Matt. v. 16. In whom an impartial infidel might perceive the true nature of the Christian faith and godliness. If the world were fuller of such living images of Christ, who, like true regenerate children, represent their heavenly Father, Christianity would not have met with so much prejudice, nor had so many enemies in the world, nor would so many millions have been kept in the darkness of heathenism and infidelity, by flying from Christians, as a sort of people that are common and unclean.

Among Christians, there are babes, that must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat, that are "unskilful in the word of righteousness;" (1 John ii. 2. 12—14. Heb. v. 12—14.) and novices, who are unsettled, and in danger of an overthrow; 1 Tim. iii. 6. John xv. 3. 5. &c. In these the nature and excellency of Christianity, is little more apparent than reason in a little child. And there are strong, confirmed Christians, who, by "reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," (Heb. v. 13, 14.) and who shew forth the glory of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; of whom God himself may say to satan and their malicious enemies, as once of Job, "Hast thou not seen my servant Job," &c. This Christian indeed I shall now describe to you, both to confute the infidel's slanders of Christianity, and to unteach men those false descriptions which have caused the presumption of the profane, and the irregularities of erroneous sectaries; and to tell you what manner of persons they be, that God is honoured by; and what you must be, if you will understand your own religion. Be Christians indeed, and you will have the comforts indeed of Christianity; and will find that its fruits and joys are not dreams, and shadows, and imaginations, if you content not yourselves with an imagination, dream, and shadow of Christianity, or with some clouded spark, or buried seed.

The Characters.

1. A Christian indeed (by which I still mean, a sound, confirmed Christian), is one that contenteth not himself to have a seed, or habit of faith, but he liveth by faith, as the sensualist by sight or sense. Not putting out the eye of sense, nor living as if he had no body, or lived not in a world of

sensible objects ; but as he is a reasonable creature, which exalteth him above the sensitive nature, so faith is the true information of his reason, about those high and excellent things, which must take him up above things sensible. He hath so firm a belief of the life to come, as procured by Christ, and promised in the Gospel, as that it serveth him for the government of his soul, as his bodily sight doth for the conduct of his body. I say not, that he is assaulted with no temptations, nor that his faith is perfect in degree, nor that believing moveth him as passionately as sight or sense would do : but it doth effectually move him through the course and tenour of his life, to do those things for the life to come, which he would do if he saw the glory of heaven ; and to shun those things for the avoiding of damnation, which he would shun if he saw the flames of hell. Whether he do these things so fervently or not, his belief is powerful, effectual, and victorious. Let sight and sense invite him to their objects, and entice him to sin, and forsake his God, the objects of faith shall prevail against them, in the bent of an even, a constant, and resolved life. It is things unseen which he taketh for his treasure, and which have his heart and hope, and chiefest labours. All things else which he hath to do, are but subservient to his faith and heavenly interest, as his sensitive faculties are ruled by his reason. His faith is not only his opinion, which teacheth him to choose what church or party he will be of ; but it is his intellectual light, by which he liveth, and in the confidence and comfort of which he dieth. “ For we walk by faith, not by sight. We groan to be clothed upon with our heavenly house. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him ;” 2 Cor. v. 7—9. “ Now the just shall live by faith ;” Heb. x. 3. “ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;” Heb. xi. 1. Most of the examples in Heb. xi. do shew you this truth, that true Christians live and govern their actions, by the firm belief of the promise of God, and of another life when this is ended. “ By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith ;” ver. 7. “ Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and ma-

ker is God ;” ver. 10. “ Moses feared not the wrath of the king ; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible ;” ver. 27. So the three witnesses (Dan. iii.), and Daniel himself, (chap. vi.) and all believers have lived this life, as Abraham the father of the faithful did ; who, as it is said of him, “ Staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ;” Rom. iv. 20. The faith of a Christian is truly divine ; and he knoweth that God’s truth is as certain as sight itself can be ; however sight be apter to move the passions. Therefore, if you can judge but what a rational man would be, if he saw heaven and hell, and all that God had appointed us to believe, then you may conjecture what a confirmed Christian is ; though sense do cause more sensible apprehensions.

2. The weak Christian also, hath a faith that is divine, as caused by God, and resting on his word and truth. And he so far liveth by this faith, as that it commandeth and guideth the scope and drift of his heart and life. But he believeth with a great deal of staggering and unbelief ; and therefore his hopes are interrupted by his troublesome doubts and fears ; and the dimness and languor of his faith is seen in the faintness of his desires, and the many blemishes of his heart and life. And sight and sensual objects are so much the more powerful with him, by how much the light and life of faith is dark and weak.

3. The hypocrite, or best of the unregenerate, believeth but either with a human faith, which resteth but on the word of man, or else with a dead, opinionative faith, which is overpowered by infidelity, or is like the dreaming thoughts of man asleep, which stir him not to action. He liveth by sight, and not by faith : for he hath not a faith that will overpower sense and sensual objects ; James ii. 14. Matt. xiii. 22.

II. 1. A Christian indeed not only knoweth why he is a Christian, but seeth those reasons for his religion, which disgrace all that the most cunning atheist or infidel can say against it ; and so far satisfy, confirm, and establish him, that emergent difficulties, temptations, and objections, do not at all stagger him, or raise any deliberate doubts in him of the truth of the word of God. He seeth first the natural evidence of those foundation-truths which nature itself maketh known ; as that there is a God of infinite being, power,

wisdom, and goodness, the Creator, the Owner, the Ruler, and the Father, felicity and end of man ; that we owe him all our love and service ; that none of our fidelity shall be in vain, or unrewarded, and none shall be finally a loser by his duty ; that man who is naturally governed by the hopes and fears of another life, is made and liveth for that other life, where his soul shall be sentenced by God his Judge, to happiness or misery, &c. And then he discerneth the attestation of God to those supernatural, superadded revelations of the Gospel, containing the doctrine of man's redemption. And he seeth how wonderfully these are built upon the former, and how excellently the Creator's and Redeemer's doctrine and laws agree ; and how much countenance supernatural truths receive from the presupposed naturals ; so that he doth not adhere to Christ and religion by the mere engagement of education, friends, or worldly advantages ; nor by a blind resolution, which wanteth nothing but a strong temptation (from a deceiver or a worldly interest) to shake or overthrow it. But he is built upon the rock, which will stand in the assault of satan's storms, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; Matt. xvi. 18. xiii. 23. vii. 25. John vi. 68, 69.

2. But a weak Christian hath but a dim and general kind of knowledge of the reasons of his religion ; or, at least, but a weak apprehension of them, though he have the best, and most unanswerable reasons. And either he is confident in the dark upon grounds which he cannot make good, and which want but a strong assault to shake them ; or else he is troubled and ready to stagger at every difficulty which occurreth. Every hard saying in the Scripture doth offend him ; and every seeming contradiction shaketh him. And the depth of mysteries, which pass his understanding, do make him say as Nicodemus of regeneration, " How can these things be ? " And if he meet with the objections of a cunning infidel, he is unable so to defend the truth, and clear his way through them, as to come off unwounded and unshaken, and to be the more confirmed in the truth of his belief, by discerning the vanity of all that is said against it ; Heb. v. 12, 13. Matt. xv. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. John xii. 16.

3. The seeming Christian either hath no solid reasons at all for his religion, or else if he have the best, he hath no

sound apprehension of them; but though he be never so learned and orthodox, and can preach and defend the faith, it is not so rooted in him as to endure the trial; but if a strong temptation from subtlety or carnal interest assault him, you shall see that he was built upon the sand, and that there was in him a secret root of bitterness, and an evil heart of unbelief, which causeth him to depart from the living God; Heb. iii. 12. Matt. xiii. 20—22. vii. 26, 27. Heb. xii. 15. John vi. 60, 64, 66. 1 Tim. vi. 10, 11.

III. 1. A Christian indeed, is not only confirmed in the essentials of Christianity, but he hath a clear, delightful sight of those useful truths, which are the integrals of Christianity, and are built upon the fundamentals, and are the branches of the master-points of faith. Though he see not all the lesser truths (which are branched out at last into innumerable particles), yet he seeth the main body of sacred verities, delivered by Christ for man's sanctification; and seeth them methodically in their proper places; and seeth how one supports another, and in how beautiful an order and contexture they are placed. And as he sticketh not in the bare principles, so he receiveth all these additions of knowledge, not notionally only, but practically, as the food on which his soul must live; Heb. v. 13, 14. vi. 1, 2. &c. Matt. xiii. 11. Eph. i. 18. iii. 18, 19. John xiii. 17.

2. A weak Christian (in knowledge) besides the principles or essentials of religion, doth know but a few disordered, scattered truths; which are also but half known, because while he hath some knowledge of those points, he is ignorant of many others, which are needful to the supporting, and clearing, and improving of them; and because he knoweth them not in their places, and order, and relation, and aspect upon other truths. And, therefore, if temptations be strong, and come with advantage, the weak Christian, in such points, is easily drawn into many errors; and thence into great confidence and conceitedness in those errors; and thence into sinful, dangerous courses in the prosecution and practice of those errors. Such are like "children tossed up and down, and carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine, through the cunning sleight and subtlety of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" Eph. iv. 14. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Col. ii. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 7.

3. The seeming Christian having no saving, practical

knowledge of the essentials of Christianity themselves, doth therefore, either neglect to know the rest, or knoweth them but notionally, as common sciences, and subjecteth them all to his worldly interest. And, therefore, is still of that side or party in religion, which, upon the account of safety, honour, or preferment, his flesh commandeth him to follow. Either he is still on the greater, rising side, and of the rulers of religion, be it what it will; or if he dissent, it is in pursuit of another game, which pride or fleshly ends have started; 2 Pet. ii. 14. Gal. iii. 3. John ix. 22. xii. 42, 43. Matt. xiii. 21, 22.

IV. 1. The Christian indeed, hath not only reason for his religion, but also hath an inward, continual principle, even the Spirit of Christ, which is as a new nature, inclining and enlivening him to a holy life; whereby he mindeth and savoureth the things of the Spirit. Not that his nature doth work blindly, as nature doth in the irrational creatures; but at least it much imitateth nature as it is found in rational creatures, where the inclination is necessary, but the operations free, and subject to reason. It is a spiritual appetite in the rational appetite, even the will, and a spiritual, visive disposition in the understanding. Not a faculty in a faculty; but the right disposition of the faculties to their highest objects, to which they are by corruption made unsuitable. So that it is neither a proper power in the natural sense, nor a mere act, but nearest to the nature of a seminal disposition or habit. It is the health and rectitude of the faculties of the soul. Even as nature hath made the understanding disposed to truth in general, and the will disposed or inclined to good in general, and to self-preservation and felicity in particular; so the Spirit of Christ doth dispose the understanding to spiritual truth, to know God and the matters of salvation, and doth incline the will to God and holiness, not blindly, as they are unknown, but to love and serve a known God. So that whether this be properly or only analogically called a nature, or rather should be called a habit, I determine not; but certainly it is a fixed disposition and inclination, which Scripture calleth the "Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4.), and "the seed of God abiding in us;" 1 John iii. 9. But most usually it is called the Spirit of God, or of Christ in us. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9. "By one

Spirit we are all baptized into one body;" 1 Cor. xii. 13. Therefore, we are said "to be in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, and by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body;" Rom. viii. 1. 9. 13. And it is called, "the Spirit of the Son, and the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" or are inclined to God, as children to their father; and the "Spirit of grace and supplication;" Rom. viii. 15. 23. 26. Gal. iv. 6. v. 17, 18. Eph. ii. 18. 22. iv. 3, 4. Phil. i. 27. ii. 1. Zech. xii. 10. From this Spirit, and the fruits of it, we are called new creatures, and quickened, and made alive to God; 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 15. Rom. vi. 11. 13. It is a great controversy, whether this holy disposition and inclination was natural to Adam or not, and consequently, whether it be a restored nature in us, or not. It was so natural to him as health is natural to the body, but not so natural as to be a necessitating principle, nor so as to be inseparable and unlosable.

2. This same Spirit and holy inclination is in the weakest Christian also, but in a small degree, and remissly operating, so as that the fleshly inclination oft seemeth to be the stronger, when he judgeth by its passionate strugglings within him. Though, indeed, the Spirit of life doth not only strive, but conquer in the main, even in the weakest Christians; Rom. viii. 9. Gal. v. 17—21.

3. The seeming Christian hath only the ineffectual motions of the Spirit to a holy life, and effectual motions and inward dispositions to some common duties of religion. And from these, with the natural principles of self-love and common honesty, with the outward persuasions of company and advantages, his religion is maintained, without the regeneration of the Spirit; John iii. 6.

V. From hence it followeth, 1. That a Christian indeed doth not serve God for fear only, but for love; even for love both of himself, and of his holy work and service. Yea, the strong Christian's love to God and holiness, is not only greater than his love to creatures, but greater than his fear of wrath and punishment. The love of God constraineth him to duty; 2 Cor. v. 14. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10.), therefore, the Gospel cannot be obeyed without it. He saith not, 'O that this were no duty, and O that this forbidden thing were lawful;' though his flesh say so, the Spirit, which is the predominant part, doth not.

But he saith, "O how I love thy law! O that my ways were so directed that I might keep thy statutes!" Psal. cxix. 5. For the Spirit is willing, even when the flesh is weak. He serveth not God against his will; but his will is to serve him more, and better than he doth. He longeth to be perfect, and perfectly to do the will of God, and taketh the remnant of his sinful infirmities to be a kind of bondage to him, which he groaneth to be delivered from. To will even perfection is present with him, though not perfectly; and though he do not all that he willeth. And this is the true meaning of Paul's complaints; Rom. vii. Because the flesh warreth against the Spirit, he cannot do the good that he would; that is, he cannot be perfect, for so he would be; Gal. v. 17. His love and will excel his practice.

2. The weak Christian also hath more love to God and holiness than to the world and fleshly pleasure. But yet his fear of punishment is greater than his love to God and holiness. To have no love to God, is inconsistent with a state of grace, and so it is to have less love to God than to the world, and less love to holiness than to sin. But to have more fear than love is consistent with sincerity of grace. Yea, the weak Christian's love to God and holiness is joined with so much backwardness and averseness, and interrupted with weariness, and with the carnal allurements and diversions of the creature, that he cannot certainly perceive whether his love and willingness be sincere or not. He goeth on in a course of duty, but so heavily, that he scarce knoweth whether his love or loathing of it be the greater. He goeth to it as a sick man to his meat, or labour. All that he doth is with so much pain or indisposedness, that to his feeling, his averseness seemeth greater than his willingness, were it not that necessity maketh him willing. For the habitual love and complacency which he hath towards God and duty, is so oppressed by fear, and by averseness, that it is not so much felt in act as they.

3. A seeming Christian hath no true love of God and holiness at all, but some ineffectual liking and wishes which are overborne by a greater backwardness, and by a greater love to earthly things; so that fear alone, without any true, effectual love, is the spring and principle of his religion and obedience. God hath not his heart, when he draweth near him with his lips; he doth more than he would do, if he

were not forced by necessity and fear ; and had rather be excused, and lead another kind of life ; Matt. xv. 8. Isa. xxix. 13. Though necessity and fear are very helpful to the most sincere, yet fear alone, without love or willingness is a graceless state.

VI. 1. A Christian indeed doth love God in these three gradations : he loveth him much for his mercy to himself, and for that goodness which consisteth in benignity to himself ; but he loveth him more for his mercy to the church, and for that goodness which consisteth in his benignity to the church. But he loveth him most of all for his infinite perfections and essential excellencies ; his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, simply in himself considered. For he knoweth that love to himself obligeth him to returns of love ; especially differencing, saving grace : and he knoweth that the souls of millions are more worth incomparably than his own, and that God may be much more honoured by them, than by him alone ; and therefore he knoweth that the mercy to many is greater mercy, and a greater demonstration of the goodness of God, and therefore doth render him more amiable to man ; Rom. ix. 3. And yet he knoweth that essential perfection and goodness of God, as simply in himself and for himself, is much more amiable than his benignity to the creature ; and that he that is the first efficient, must needs be the ultimate, final cause of all things ; and that God is not finally for the creature, but the creature for God, (for all that he needeth it not) “ For of him, and through him, and to him are all things ;” Rom. xi. 36. And as he is infinitely better than ourselves, so he is to be better loved than ourselves. As I love a wise and virtuous person, though he be one I never expect to receive any thing from, and therefore love him for his own sake, and not for his benignity or usefulness to me : so must I love God most for his essential perfections, though his benignity also doth represent him amiable. As he is blindly selfish that would not rather himself be annihilated or perish, than whole kingdoms should all perish, or the sun be taken out of the world ; (because that which is best must be loved as best, and therefore be best loved :) so is he more blind, who in his estimative, complacential love, preferreth not infinite, eternal goodness, before such an imperfect, silly creature as himself (or all the world). We are commanded to love our neigh-

bour as ourselves, when God is to be loved with all the heart, and soul, and might, which therefore signifieth more than to love him as ourselves; (or else he were to be loved no more than our neighbour). So that the strong Christian loveth God so much above himself, as that he accounteth himself and all his interests, as nothing in comparison of God, yea, and loveth himself more for God than for himself: though his own salvation be loved and desired by him, and God must be loved for his mercy and benignity; yet that salvation itself which he desireth, is nothing else but the love of God: wherein his love is the final, felicitating act, and God is the final, felicitating object, and the felicity of loving is not first desired; but the attractive object doth draw out our love, and thereby make us consequentially happy in the enjoying exercise thereof. Thus God is all and in all to the soul; Psal. lxxiii. 25. Rom. xi. 36. 1 Cor. x. 31. Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxiii. 37. xix. 17.

2. A weak Christian also loveth God as one that is infinitely better than himself and all things; (or else he did not love him at all as God). But in the exercise he is so much in the minding of himself, and so seldom and weak in the contemplation of God's perfections, that he feeleth more of his love to himself, than unto God; and feeleth more of his love to God, as for the benefits which he receiveth in and by himself, than as for his own perfections; yea, and often feeleth the love of himself to work more strongly than his love to the church, and all else in the world. The care of his own salvation is the highest principle which he ordinarily perceiveth in any great strength in him; and he is very little and weakly carried out to the love of the whole church, and to the love of God above himself; Phil. ii. 20—22. 1 Cor. x. 24. Jer. xlv. 5.

3. A seeming Christian hath a common love of God as he is good, both in himself, and unto the world, and unto him. But this is not for his holiness; and it is but a general, ineffectual approbation and praise of God, which followeth a dead, ineffectual unbelief: but his chief, predominant love is always to his carnal self, and the love both of his soul, and of God, is subjected to his fleshly self-love. His chief love to God is for prospering him in the world, and such as is subservient to his sensuality, pride, covetous-

ness, presumption and false hopes; Luke xviii. 21, 22. 1 John ii. 15. 2 Tim. iii. 2, 4. John xii. 43. v. 42.

VII. 1. A Christian indeed doth practically take this love of God, and the holy expressions of it, to be the very life and top of his religion, and the very life, and beauty, and pleasure of his soul : he makes it his work in the world, and loveth himself (complacentially) but so far as he findeth in himself the love of God ; and so far as he findeth himself without it, he loatheth himself as an unlovely carcase : and so far as his prayers and obedience are without it, he looks on them but as unacceptable, loathsome things ; and therefore he is taken up in the study of redemption, because he can nowhere so clearly see the love and loveliness of God, as in the face of a Redeemer, even in the wonders of love revealed in Christ. And he studieth them, that love may kindle love ; and therefore he delighteth in the contemplating of God's attributes and infinite perfections ; and in the beholding of him in the frame of the creation, and reading his name in the book of his works, that his soul may by such steps, be raised in love and admiration of his Maker. And as it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun or light, so it is to the mind of the Christian indeed, to be frequently and seriously contemplating the nature and glory of God : and the exercise of love in such contemplations is most of his daily walk with God. And therefore it is also, that he is more taken up in the exercises of thanksgiving, and the praises of the Almighty, than in the lower parts of godliness ; so that though he neglect not confession of sin and humiliation, yet doth he use them but in subserviency to the love and praise of God : he doth but rid out the filth that is indecent in a heart that is to entertain its God. He placeth not the chief part of his religion in any outward duties, nor in any lower, preparatory acts ; nor doth he stop in any of these, however he neglect them not. But he useth them all to advance his soul in the love of God ; and useth them the more diligently, because the love of God, to which they conduce, as to their proper end, is so high and excellent a work. Therefore in David's psalms you find a heart delighting itself in the praises of God, and in love with his word and works, in order to his praises ; Psal. cxvi. 1. &c. cvi. ciii. cxlv. cxlvi. &c. Rom. viii. 37.

2. The weak Christian is taken up but very little with the lively exercises of love and praise, nor with any studies higher than his own distempered heart : the care of his poor soul, and the complaining of his manifold infirmities and corruptions, is the most of his religion : and if he set himself to the praising of God, or to thanksgiving, he is as dull and short in it as if it were not his proper work ; Psal. lxxvii. Mark ix. 24. xvi. 14.

3. The seeming Christian liveth to the flesh ; and carnal self-love is the active principle of his life ; and he is neither exercised in humiliation or in praise sincerely, being unacquainted both with holy joy and sorrow : but knowing that he is in the hands of God, to prosper or destroy him, he will humble himself to him to escape his judgments, and praise him with some gladness for the sunshine of prosperity ; and he will seem to be piously thanking God, when he is but rejoicing in the accommodations of his flesh, or strengthening his presumption and false hopes of heaven ; Luke xviii. 11. xii. 19. Isa. lviii. 2.

VIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that is so apprehensive of his lost condition, unworthiness, and utter insufficiency for himself, and of the office, perfection, and sufficiency of Christ, that he hath absolutely put his soul, and all his hopes into the hands of Christ, and now liveth in him and upon him ; as having no life but what he hath from Christ, nor any other way of access to God, or acceptance of his person, or his service, but by him. In him he beholdeth and delightfully admireth the love and goodness of the Father ; in him he hath access with boldness unto God ; through him the most terrible, avenging judge is become a reconciled God, and he that we could not remember but with trembling, is become the most desirable object of our thoughts. He is delightfully employed in prying into the unsearchable mystery : and Christ doth even dwell in his heart by faith ; “and being rooted and grounded in love, he apprehendeth with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and knoweth the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ;” Ephes. iii. 17—19. He perceiveth that he is daily beholden to Christ that he is not in hell, that sin doth not make him like to devils, and that he is not utterly forsaken of God : he feeleth that he is beholden to Christ for every hour’s time, and every mercy to

his soul or body, and for all his hope of mercy in this life, or in the life to come. He perceiveth that he is dead in himself, and that his "life is hid with Christ in God." And therefore he is as "buried and risen again with Christ;" even "dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ;" Rom. vi. 3, 4. 11. Col. iv. 4. He saith with Paul, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Thus doth he live as truly and constantly by the second Adam, who is a quickening spirit, as he doth by the first Adam, who was a living soul; 1 Cor. xv. 45. This is a confirmed Christian's life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he be also united unto Christ, and live by faith, yet how languid are the operations of that faith? How dark and dull are his thoughts of Christ? How little is his sense of the wonders of God's love revealed to the world, in the mystery of redemption? How little use doth he make of Christ? And how little life receives he from him? And how little comfort findeth he in believing, in comparison of that which the confirmed find? He is to Christ as a sick person to his food: he only picketh here and there a little of the crumbs of the bread of life, to keep him from dying; but is wofully unacquainted with the most powerful works of faith. He is such a believer as is next to an unbeliever, and such a member of Christ, as is next to a mere stranger.

3. And for the seeming Christian, he may understand the letter of the Gospel, and number himself with Christ's disciples, and be baptized with water, and have such a faith as is a dead opinion; but he hath not an effectual, living faith, nor is baptized with the Holy Ghost; nor is his soul engaged absolutely and entirely in the covenant of Christianity to his Redeemer: he may have a handsome, well-made image of Christianity, but it is the flesh and sense, and not Christ and faith, by which his life is actuated and ordered; John iii. 6. Rom. ii. 28.

IX. 1. A Christian indeed doth firmly believe that Christ is a "Teacher sent from God," (John iii. 2.) and that he came from heaven to reveal his Father's will, and to bring "life and immortality" more fully "to light by his Gospel;" and that if an angel had been sent to tell us of the life to

come, and the way thereto, he had not been so credible and venerable a messenger as the Son of God; and therefore he taketh him alone for his chief Teacher, and knoweth no master on earth but him, and such as he appointeth under him: his study in the world is to know a crucified and glorified Christ, and God by him, and he regardeth no other knowledge, nor useth any other studies but this, and such as are subservient to this. Even when he studieth the works of nature, it is as by the conduct of the Restorer of nature, and as one help appointed him by Christ, to lead him up to the knowledge of God. And therefore he perceiveth that Christ is made of God unto us, wisdom as well as righteousness: and that Christianity is the true philosophy; and that the wisdom of the world, which is only about worldly things, from worldly principles, to a worldly end, is foolishness with God: he taketh nothing for wisdom which tendeth not to acquaint him more with God, or lead him up to everlasting happiness. Christ is his Teacher (either by natural or supernatural revelation) and God is his ultimate end in all his studies, and all that he desireth to know in the world. He valueth knowledge according to its usefulness: and he knoweth that its chief use is to lead us to the love of God; Matt. xxiii. 8. 1 Cor. i. 30. ii. 2, &c. John. i. 18. Col. ii. 3. Ephes. iv. 13.

2. Though the weak Christian hath the same Master, yet alas, how little doth he learn! And how oft is he hearken- ing to the teaching of the flesh! And how carnal, and com- mon is much of his knowledge! How little doth he depend on Christ, in his inquiries after the things of nature! And how apt is he to think almost as highly of the teaching of Aris- totle, Plato, Seneca, or at least of some excellent preacher, as of Christ's! And to forget that these are but his messen- gers and instruments, to convey unto us several parcels of that truth, which is his, and not theirs, and which (naturally or supernaturally) they received from him; and all these candles were lighted by him, who is the sun! And how little doth this weak Christian refer his common knowledge to God; or use it for him; or to the furtherance of his own and others happiness! 1 Tim. ii. 4.

3. And the seeming Christian, though materially he may be eminent for knowledge, yet is so far from resigning him- self to the teachings of Christ, that he maketh even his

knowledge of Christian verities to be to him but a common, carnal thing, while he knoweth it but in a common manner, and useth it to the service of the flesh, and never yet learned so much as to be a new creature, nor to love God as God above the world; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

X. 1. A Christian indeed is one whose repentance hath been deep, and serious, and universal, and unchangeable: it hath gone to the very roots of sin, and to the bottom of the sore, and hath not left behind it any reigning, unmortified sin, nor any prevalent love to fleshly pleasures. His repentance did not only disgrace his sin, and cast some reproachful words against it, and use confessions to excuse him from mortification, and to save its life, and hide it from the mortal blow; nor doth he only repent of his open sins, and those that are most censured by the beholders of his life; but he specially perceives the dangerous poison of pride, and unbelief, and worldliness, and the want of the love of God; and all his outward and smaller sins, do serve to shew him the greater malignity of these, and these are the matter of his greatest lamentations. He taketh not up a profession of religion with strong corruptions, secretly covered in his heart; but his religion consisteth in the death of his corruptions, and the purifying of his heart; he doth not secretly cherish any sin as too sweet or too profitable to be utterly forsaken, nor overlook it as a small, inconsiderable matter. But he feeleth sin to be his enemy and his disease, and as he desireth not one enemy, one sickness, one wound, one broken bone, one serpent in his bed, so he desireth not any one sin to be spared in his soul; but saith with David; "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me: and lead me in the way everlasting;" Psal. cxxxix. 23. He liveth in no gross and scandalous sin: and his infirmities are comparatively few and small; so that if he were not a sharper accuser of himself, than the most observant spectators are (that are just) there would little be known by him that is culpable and matter of reproof. He "walketh in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless;" (as to any notable miscarriage,) Luke i. 6. He is "blameless and harmless, as the son of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom he shineth as a light in the world;" Phil. ii. 15. The fear,

and love, and obedience of God, is the work and tenor of his life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he hath no sin but what he is a hater of, and fain would be delivered from, yet, alas! how imperfect is his deliverance! And how weak is the hatred of his sin, and mixed with so much proneness to it, that his life is much blemished with the spots of his offences. Though his unbelief, and pride, and worldliness are not predominant in him, yet are they (or some of them) still so strong, and fight so much against his faith, humility, and heavenliness, that he can scarcely tell which hath the upper hand; nor can others that see the failings of his life, discern whether the good or the evil be most prevalent. Though it be heaven which he most seeketh, yet earth is so much regarded by him, that his heavenly-mindedness is greatly damped and suppressed by it. And though it be the way of godliness and obedience which he walketh in, yet is it with so many stumblings and falls, if not deviations also, that maketh him oft a burden to himself, a shame to his profession, and a snare or trouble to those about him. His heart is like an ill-swept house, that hath many a sluttish corner in it. And his life is like a motheaten garment, which hath many a hole, which you may see if you bring it into the light; 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. vi. 6—8. xi. 18. 21, 22, &c.

3. And for the seeming Christian, his repentance doth but crop the branches, it goeth not to the root and heart of his sin: it leaveth his fleshly mind and interest in the dominion: it polisheth his life, but maketh him not a new creature: it casteth away those sins which the flesh can spare, and which bring more shame, or loss, or trouble with them, than worldly honour, gain or pleasure; but still he is a very worldling at the heart; and the sins which his fleshly pleasures and felicity consist in, he will hide by confessions and seeming oppositions, but never mortify and forsake. As Judas, that while he followed Christ was yet a thief, and a covetous hypocrite; John xii. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 10.

XI. 1. Hence it followeth that a Christian indeed doth heartily love the searching light, that it may fully acquaint him with his sins: he is truly desirous to know the worst of himself; and therefore useth the word of God, as a candle, to shew him what is in his heart; and bringeth himself willingly into the light: he loveth the most searching books

and preachers ; not only because they disclose the faults of other men, but his own : he is not one that so loveth his pleasant and profitable sins, as to fly the light, lest he should be forced to know them, and so to forsake them ; but because he hateth them, and is resolved to forsake them, therefore he would know them ; John iii. 19—21. Therefore he is not only patient under reproofs, but loveth them, and is thankful to a charitable reprove, and maketh a good use even of malicious and passionate reproofs ; Psal. cxli. 5. 2 Sam. xvi. 11. He saith, as in Job xxxiv. 32. “ That which I see not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.” His hatred of the sin, and desire to be reformed, suffer not his heart by pride to rise up against the remedy, and reject reproof. Though he will not falsely confess his duty to be his sin, nor take the judgment of every selfish, passionate, or ignorant reprove to be infallible, nor to be his rule ; yet if a judicious, impartial person do but suspect him of a fault, he is ready to suspect himself of it, unless he be certain that he is clear. He loveth him better that would save him from his sin, than him that would entice him to it ; and taketh him for his best friend who dealeth freely with him, and is the greatest enemy to his faults : and a flatterer he taketh but for the most dangerous, insinuating kind of foe.

2. But the weak Christian, though he hate his sin, and love reformation, and loveth the most searching books and preachers, and loveth a gentle kind of reproof, yet hath so much pride and selfishness remaining, that any reproof that seemeth disgraceful to him, goeth very hardly down with him ; like a bitter medicine to a queasy stomach : if you reprove him before others, or if your reproof be not very carefully sugared and minced, so that it rather extenuate than aggravate his fault, he will be ready to cast it up into your face, and with retort to tell you of some faults of your own, or some way shew you how little he loveth it, and how little thanks he giveth you for it. If you will not let him alone with his infirmities, he will distaste you, if not fall out with you, and let you know, by his smart and impatience, that you have touched him in the sore and galled place. He must be a man of very great skill in managing a reproof, that shall not somewhat provoke him to distaste.

3. And for the seeming Christian, this is “ his condemna-

tion, that light is come into the world, and he loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." He cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be discovered and reprov'd ; John iii. 19—21. He liketh a searching preacher for others, and loveth to hear their sins laid open, if it no way reflecteth upon himself. But for himself he liketh best a general or a smoothing preacher ; and he flieth from a quick and searching ministry, lest he should be proved and convinced to be in a state of sin and misery. Guilt maketh him fear or hate a lively, searching preacher, even as the guilty prisoner hateth the judge. He loveth no company so well as that which thinketh highly of him, and applaudeth and commendeth him, and neither by their reproofs or stricter lives, will trouble his conscience with the remembrance of his sin, or the knowledge of his misery. He will take you for his enemy for telling him the truth, if you go about to convince him of his undone condition, and tell him of his beloved sin. Sin is taken to be as himself ; it is he that doth evil, and not only sin that dwelleth in him ; and therefore all that you say against his sin, he taketh as spoken against himself ; and he will defend his sin as he would defend himself : he will hear you till you come to touch himself, as the Jews did by Stephen, Acts vii. 51. 54. when they heard him call them, stiff-necked resisters of God, and persecutors, then they were cut to the heart, and did grind their teeth at him. And as they did by Paul, Acts xxii. 22. " They gave audience to this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live ;" Gal. iv. 16. John ix. 40. Matt. xxi. 45. The priests and Pharisees would have laid hands on Christ, when they perceived that he spake of them. And Ahab hated Micaiah, because he did not prophesy good of him, but evil ; 1 Kings xxii. 8. Deservedly do they perish in their sin and misery, that hate him that would deliver them, and refuse the remedy. " Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish ;" Prov. xii. 1. " He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy ;" Prov. xxix. 1.

XII. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that unfeignedly desireth to attain to the highest degree of holiness, and to be perfectly freed from every thing that is sin. He desireth

perfection, though not with a perfect desire. He sitteth not down contentedly in any low degree of grace. He looketh on the holiest (how poor soever) with much more reverence and esteem than on the most rich and honourable in the world; and he had far rather be one of the most holy, than one of the most prosperous and great; he had rather be a Paul or Timothy, than a Cæsar or an Alexander. He complaineth of nothing with so much sorrow, as that he can know and love his God no more! How happy an exchange would he count it, if he had more of the knowledge and love of God, though he lost all his wealth and honour in the world! His smallest sins are a greater burden to him, than his greatest corporal wants and sufferings: as Paul, who because he could not perfectly fulfil God's law, and be as good as he would, he crieth out as in bondage, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24.

2. And for the weak Christian, though he is habitually and resolvedly of the same mind, yet, alas! his desires after perfection are much more languid in him; and he hath too much patience and reconciledness to some of his sins, and sometimes taketh them to be sweet; so that his enmity to his pride, or covetousness, or passion, is much abated, and suffereth his sin to waste his grace, and wound his conscience, and hinder much of his communion with God. He seeth not the odiousness of sin, nor the beauty of holiness, with so clear a sight as the confirmed Christian doth: he hateth sin more for the ill effects of it, than for its malignant, hateful nature: he seeth not clearly the intrinsic evil that is in sin, which maketh it deserve the pains of hell: nor doth he discern the difference between a holy and unholy soul, so clearly as the stronger Christian doth; 1 Cor. iii. 2, 3. Heb. xii. 1.

3. And as for the seeming Christian, though he may approve of perfect holiness in another, and may wish for it himself, when he thinketh of it but in the general, and not as it is exclusive and destructive of his beloved sin; yet when it cometh to particulars, he cannot away with it; he is so far from desiring it, that he will not endure it. The name of holiness he liketh; and that preservation from hell which is the consequent of it; but when he understandeth what it is, he hath no mind of it. That holiness which

should cure his ambition and pride, and make him contented with a low condition, he doth not like: he loveth not that holiness, which would deprive him of his covetousness, his intemperance in pleasant meats and drinks, his fleshly lusts, and inordinate pleasures. Nor doth he desire that holiness should employ his soul in the love of God, and in daily prayer, and meditating on his word, and raise him to a heavenly life on earth.

XIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that maketh God and heaven the end, reward and motive of his life; and liveth not in the world for any thing in the world, but for that endless happiness which the next world only can afford. The reasons which actuate his thoughts, and choice, and all his life, are fetched from heaven. The interest of God and his soul as to eternity, is the ruling interest in him. As a traveller goeth all the way, and beareth all the difficulties of it, for the sake of the end or place that he is going to, (however he may talk of many other matters by the way;) so is it with a Christian; he knoweth nothing worthy of his life and labours, but that which he hopeth for hereafter. This world is too sinful, and too vile and short to be his felicity. His very trade and work in the world is to lay up a treasure in heaven, (Matt. vi. 20.) "and to lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and to lay hold on eternal life;" (1 Tim. vi. 19.) and therefore his very heart is there, (Matt. vi. 21.) and he is employed in seeking and setting his affections on the things above: (Col. iii. 1—3.) and his conversation and traffic are in heaven; (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) "he looketh not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal:" (2 Cor. iv. 18.) he is a stranger upon earth, and heaven is to him as his home.

2. The weak Christian also hath the same end, and hope, and motive; and preferreth his hopes of the life to come, before all the wealth and pleasures of this life: but yet his thoughts of heaven are much more strange and dull; he hath so much doubting and fear yet mixed with his faith and hope, that he looketh before him to his everlasting state, with backwardness and trouble, and with small desire and delight. He hath so much hope of heaven, as to abate his fears of hell, and make him think of eternity with more

quietness than he could do, if he found himself unregenerate ; but not so much as to make his thoughts of heaven so free, and sweet, and frequent, nor his desires after it so strong, as the confirmed Christian's are : and therefore his duties, and his speech of heaven, and his endeavours to obtain it, are all more languid and unconstant ; and he is much more prone to fall in love with earth, and to entertain the motions of reconciliation to the world, and to have his heart too much set upon some place, or person, or thing below, and to be either delighted too much in the possession of it, or afflicted and troubled too much with the loss of it : earthly things are too much the motives of his life, and the reasons of his joys and griefs : though he hath the true belief of a life to come, and it prevaieth in the main against the world, yet it is but little that he useth to the commanding, and raising, and comforting his soul, in comparison of what a strong believer doth ; Matt. xvi. 22, 23.

3. But the seeming Christian would serve God and mammon, and placeth his chief and most certain happiness practically on earth ; though speculatively he know and say that heaven is better, yet doth he not practically judge it to be so to him ; and therefore he loveth the world above it, and he doth most carefully lay up a treasure on earth ; (Matt. vi. 19.) and is resolved first to seek and secure his portion here below ; and yet he taketh heaven for a reserve, as knowing that the world will cast him off at last, and die he must, there is no remedy ; and therefore he taketh heaven as next unto the best, as his second hope, as better than hell, and will go in religion as far as he can, without the loss of his prosperity here ; so that earth and flesh do govern and command the design and tenor of his life ; but heaven and his soul shall have all that they can spare ; which may be enough to make him pass with men for one eminently religious ; 1 John ii. 15. Matt. xiii. 22. Luke xviii. 22, 23. xiv. 24, 33. Psal. xvii. 14. Phil. iii. 18—20.

XIV. 1. A Christian indeed is one that having taken heaven for his felicity, doth account no labour or cost too great for the obtaining of it : he hath nothing so dear to him in this world, which he cannot spare and part with for God and the world to come : he doth not only notionally know that nothing should seem too dear or hard for the securing of our salvation ; but he knoweth this practically, and is re-

solved accordingly. Though difficulties may hinder him in particular acts, and his executions come not up to the height of his desires (Rom. vii. 16, 17, &c.), yet he is resolved that he will never break on terms with Christ. There is no duty so hard which he is not willing and resolved to perform; and no sin so sweet or gainful which he is not willing to forsake: he knoweth how unprofitable a bargain he makes, who winneth the world, and loseth his own soul; and that no gain can ransom his soul, or recompense him for the loss of his salvation; Mark viii. 36. He knoweth that it is impossible to be a loser by God, or to purchase heaven at too dear a rate; he knoweth that whatsoever it cost him, heaven will fully pay for all; and that it is the worldling's labour, and not the saint's, that is repented of at last. He marvelleth more at distracted sinners, for making such a stir for wealth, and honours, and command, than they marvel at him for making so much ado for heaven. He knoweth that this world may be too dearly bought, but so cannot his salvation; yea, he knoweth that even our duty itself, is not our smallest privilege and mercy; and that the more we do for God, the more we receive, and the greater is our gain and honour; and that the sufferings of believers for righteousness sake, do not only prognosticate their joys in heaven, but occasion here the greatest joys that any short of heaven partake of; Matt. v. 11, 12. Rom. v. 1—3. &c. He is not one that desireth the end without the means, and would be saved, so it may be on cheap and easy terms; but he absolutely yieldeth to the terms of Christ, and saith with Austin, 'Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis;' 'Cause me to do what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.' Though Pelagius contradicted the first sentence, and the flesh the second, yet Augustine owned both, and so doth every true believer: he greatly complaineth of his backwardness to obey, but never complaineth of the strictness of the command. He loveth the holiness, justness and goodness of the laws, when he bewaileth the unholiness and badness of his heart: he desireth not God to command him less, but desireth grace and ability to do more. He is so far from the mind of the ungodly world, who cry out against too much holiness, and making so much ado for heaven, that he desireth even to reach to the degree of angels, and would fain have "God's will to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven;" and there-

fore the more desireth to be in heaven, that he may do it better; Psal.cxix.5. Rom.vii.24.

2. The weak Christian hath the same estimation and resolution; but when it comes to practice, as his will is less confirmed, and more corrupted and divided, so little impediments and difficulties are great temptations to him, and stop him more in the way of his obedience. All his duty is much more tedious to him, and all his sufferings are much more burdensome to him, than to confirmed Christians; and therefore he is more easily tempted into omissions and impatience, and walketh not so evenly or comfortably with God. When the spirit is willing, it yieldeth oft to the weakness of the flesh, because it is willing in too remiss a degree; Matt.xxvi.41. Gal.ii.14.

3. But the seeming Christian (though notionally and generally he may approve of strictness) yet secretly at the heart hath always this reserve, that he will not serve God at too dear a rate. His worldly felicity he cannot part with, for all the hopes of the life to come; and yet he will not, he dare not renounce and give up those hopes; and therefore he maketh himself a religion of the easiest and cheapest parts of Christianity, (among which, sometimes, the strictest opinions may fall out to be one part, so be it they be separated from the strictest practice :) and this easy, cheap religion he will needs believe to be true Christianity and godliness, and so will hope to be saved upon these terms: and though he cannot but know that it is the certain character of a hypocrite, to have any thing nearer and dearer to his heart than God, yet he hopeth that it is not so with him, because his convinced judgment can say, that God is best, and the world is vanity, while yet his heart and affections so much contradict his opinion, as almost to say, "There is no God;" for his heart knoweth and loveth no God as God, that is, above his worldly happiness. He is resolved to do so much in religion as he findeth necessary to delude his conscience, and make himself believe that he is godly, and shall be saved; but when he cometh to forsake all, and take up the cross, and practise the costliest parts of duty, then you shall see that mammon was better loved than God, and he will go away sorrowful, and hope to be saved upon easier terms (Luke xviii.23.), for he was never resigned absolutely to God.

XV. 1. A confirmed Christian is one that taketh self-denial for the one half of his religion; and therefore hath bestowed one half of his endeavours to attain and exercise it. He knoweth that the fall of man was a turning to himself from God; and that selfishness and want of love to God, are the sum of all corruption and ungodliness; and that the love of God and self-denial are the sum of all religion; and that conversion is nothing but the turning of the heart from carnal self to God by Christ: and therefore on this hath his care and labour been so successfully laid out, that he hath truly and practically found out something which is much better than himself, and to be loved and preferred before himself, and which is to be his chief and ultimate end. He maketh not a God of himself any more, but useth himself for God, to fulfil his will, as a creature of his own, that hath no other end and use: he no more preferreth himself above all the world, but esteemeth himself a poor and despicable part of the world, and more highly valueth the honour of God, and the welfare of the church, and the good of many, than any interest of his own. Though God in nature hath taught him to regard his own felicity and to love himself, and not to seek the glory of God, and the good of many souls in opposition to his own, yet he hath taught him to prefer them (though in conjunction) much before his own: for reason telleth him that man is nothing in comparison of God, and that we are made by him and for him, and that the welfare of the church or public societies, is better (in order to the highest ends) than the welfare of some one. Selfishness in the unregenerate, is like an inflammation or imposthume, which draweth the humours from other parts of the body to itself: the interest of God and man are all swallowed up in the regard that men have to self-interest: and the love of God and our neighbour is turned into self-love. But self is as annihilated in the confirmed Christian, so that it ruleth not his judgment, his affections, or his choice: and he that lived in and to himself, as if God and all the world were but for him, doth now live to God, as one that is good for nothing else, and findeth himself in seeking him that is infinitely above himself; Luke xiv. 31—33. Phil. ii. 4. 21.

2. And the weak Christian hath attained to so much self-denial, that self is not predominant in him against the

love of God and his neighbour; but yet above all other sins, too great a measure of selfishness still remaineth in him. These words 'own, and mine, and self,' are too significant with him; every thing of his own is regarded inordinately, with partiality, and too much selfishness. A word against himself, or an injury to himself, is more to him than worse against his brother: he is too little mindful of the glory of God, and of the public good, and the souls of others; and even when he is mindful of his own soul, he is too regardless of the souls of many, that by prayer, or exhortation, or other means, he ought to help: as a small candle lighteth but a little way, and a small fire heateth not far off, so is his love so much confined, that it reacheth not far from him: he valueth his friends too much upon their respect to please himself, and loveth men too much, as they are partial for him; and too little upon the pure account of grace, and their love to Christ and serviceableness to the church. He easily overvalueth his own abilities, and is too confident of his own understanding, and apt to have too high conceits of any opinions that are his own; he is too apt to be tempted unto uncharitableness against those that cross him in his interest or way. He is apt to be too negligent in the work of God, when any self-interest doth stand against it; and too much to seek himself, his own esteem, or his own commodity, when he should devote himself to the good of souls, and give up himself to the work of God: though he is not like the hypocrite, that preferreth himself before the will of God and the common good, yet selfishness greatly stoppeth, interrupteth, and hindereth him in God's work; and any great danger, or loss, or shame, or other concernment of his own, doth seem a greater matter to him, and oftener turn him out of the way, than it will with a confirmed Christian. They were not all hypocrites that Paul speaketh of in that sad complaint, "For I have no man like-minded (to Timothy) who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's;" (Phil. ii. 20, 21.) that is, they too much seek their own, and not entirely enough the things that are Christ's; which Timothy did naturally, as if he had been born to it; and grace had made the love of Christ, and the souls of men, and the good of others, as natural to him, as the love of himself. Alas! how loudly do their own distempers, and soul-miscarriages, and the di-

visions and calamities of the church, proclaim, that the weaker sort of Christians have yet too much selfishness, and that self-denial is lamentably imperfect in them.

3. But in the seeming Christian, selfishness is still the predominant principle ; he loveth God but for himself ; and he never had any higher end than self : all his religion, his opinions, his practice is animated by self-love, and governed by it, even by the love of carnal self. Self-esteem, self-conceitedness, self-love, self-willedness, self-seeking and self-saving are the constitution of his heart and life. He will be of that opinion, and way and party in religion, which selfishness directeth him to choose. He will go no further in religion than self-interest and safety will allow him to go. He can change his friend, and turn his love into hatred, and his praises into reproach, whenever self-interest shall require it. He can make himself believe, and labour to make others believe, that the wisest and holiest servants of God are erroneous, humorous, hypocrites, and insufferable, if they do but stand cross to his opinions and interest : for he judgeth of them, and loveth or hateth them, principally as they conform to his will and interest, or as they are against it. As the godly measure all persons and things, by the will and interest of God, so do all ungodly men esteem them as they stand in reference to themselves. When their factious interest required it, the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, could make themselves and others believe, that the Son of God himself was a breaker of the law, and an enemy to Cæsar, and a blasphemer, and unworthy to live on the earth ; and that Paul was a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people, and a ringleader of a sect, and a profaner of the temple ; (Acts xxiv. 5, 6.) and which of the prophets and apostles did they not persecute ? Because Christ's doctrine doth cross the interest of selfish men, therefore the world doth so generally rise up against it with indignation, even as a country will rise against an invading enemy : for he cometh to take away that which is dearest to them ; as it is said of Luther, that he meddled with the pope's crown, and the friars' bellies ; and therefore no wonder if they swarmed all about his ears. Selfishness is so general and deeply rooted, that (except with a few self-denying saints) self-love and self-interest rule the world. And if you would know how to please a graceless man, serve but his

carnal interest, and you have done it: be of his opinion (or take on you to be so,) applaud him, admire him, flatter him, obey him, promote his preferment, honour and wealth, be against his enemies; in a word, make him your God, and sell your soul to gain his favour, and so it is possible you may gain it.

XVI. 1. A Christian indeed hath so far mortified the flesh, and brought all his senses and appetites into subjection to sanctified reason, as that there is no great rebellion or perturbation in his mind: but a little matter, a holy thought, or a word from God, doth presently rebuke and quiet his inordinate desires. The flesh is as a well-broken and well-ridden horse, that goeth on his journey obediently and quietly, and not with striving, and chaffing, and vexatious resisting: though still flesh will be flesh, and will be weak, and will fight against the Spirit, so that we cannot do all the good we would; (Isa. v. 17. Rom. vii. 16, 17, &c.) yet in the confirmed Christian, it is so far tamed and subdued, that its rebellion is much less, and its resistance weaker, and more easily overcome: it causeth not any notable unevenness in his obedience, nor blemishes in his life; it is no other than consisteth with a readiness to obey the will of God. Gal. v. 24, 25. 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof: they run not as uncertainly; they fight not as one that beateth the air; but they keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest by any means they should be castaways. They put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;" Rom. xiii. 13, 14. As we see to a temperate man, how sweet and easy temperance is, when to a glutton, or drunkard, or riotous liver it is exceeding hard; so it is in all other points with a confirmed Christian. He hath so far crucified the flesh, that it is as dead to its former lusts; and so far mastered it, that it doth easily and quickly yield. And this maketh the life of such a Christian, not only pure, but very easy to him, in comparison of other men's: nay, more than this, he can use his sense (as he can use the world, the objects of sense,) in subserviency to faith and his salvation. His eye doth but open a window to his mind, to hold and admire the Creator in his work. His taste of the sweetness of the creatures is but a means, by which the sweeter love

of God doth pass directly to his heart. His sense of pleasure is but the passage of spiritual, holy pleasure to his mind. His sense of bitterness and pain is but the messenger to tell his heart of the bitterness and vexatiousness of sin. As God in the creation of us, made our senses but as the inlet and passage for himself into our minds, (even as he made all the creatures to represent him to us by this passage ;) so grace doth restore our very senses (with the creature) to this their holy, original use ; that the goodness of God, through the goodness of the creature, may pass to our hearts, and be the effect and end of all.

2. But, for the weak Christian, though he have mortified the deeds of the body by the Spirit, and live not after the flesh, but be freed from its captivity or reign ; (Gal. v. 24. Rom. viii. 1. 7—13.) yet hath he such remnants of concupiscence and sensuality, as make it a far harder matter to him to live in temperance, and deny his appetite, and govern his senses, and restrain them from rebellion and excess : he is like a weak man upon an ill-ridden, headstrong horse, who hath much ado to keep his saddle and keep his way. He is more strongly inclined to fleshly lusts, or excess in meat, or drink, or sleep, or sports, or some fleshly pleasure, than the mortified, temperate person is, and therefore is oftener guilty of some excess ; so that his life is a very tiresome conflict, and very uneasy to himself, because the less the flesh is mortified, the more able it is to raise perturbations, and to put faith and reason to a continual flight. And most of the scandals and blemishes of his life arise from hence, even the successes of the flesh against the Spirit ; so that (though he live not in any gross or wilful sins ;) yet in lesser measures of excess he is too frequently overtaken : how few be there that in meat and sleep do not usually exceed their measure ? And they are easily tempted to libertine opinions, which indulge the flesh, having a weaker preservative against them than stronger Christians have ; Matt. xvi. 22, 23. Gal. v. 13. i. 16. ii. 12—14. Col. ii. 11.

3. But the seeming Christian is really carnal. The flesh is the predominant part with him ; and the interest of the flesh is the ruling interest. He washeth away the outward filth, and in hope of salvation, will be as religious as the flesh will give him leave ; and will deny it in some smaller matters, and will serve it in a religious way, and not in so

gross and impudent a manner as the atheists and openly profane. But for all that he never conquered the flesh indeed ; but seeketh its prosperity more than the pleasing of God and his salvation : and among prayers, and sermons, and holy conference, and books, yea, and formal fastings too, he is serving the flesh with so much the more dangerous impenitency, by how much the more his cloak of formality hindereth him from the discerning of his sin ; many an one that is of unblemished reputation in religion, doth constantly serve his appetite in meat and drink, (though without any notable excess,) and his fleshly mind in the pleasure of his dwelling, wealth, and accommodations, as much as some profane ones do, if not much more. And whenever it cometh to a parting trial, they will shew that the flesh was the ruling part, and will venture their souls to secure its interest ; Luke xviii. 23. xiv. 33. Rom. viii. 5—7. 9. 13. Matt. xiii. 21, 22. Jude 19.

XVII. 1. Hence it followeth that a Christian indeed preferreth the means of his spiritual benefit and salvation incomparably before all corporal commodities and pleasures. He had rather dwell under the teaching and guidance of an able, experienced pastor, though it be cross to his prosperity and worldly gain, than to live under an ignorant or dead-hearted preacher, when it furthereth his trading or more accommodateth his flesh : (though yet he must not remove when God layeth any restraint upon him, by his duty to his family, or others :) he had rather if he be a servant, dwell in a family where he may do or receive most spiritual good, than in a carnal family, where he may have more ease, and better fare, and greater wages. If he be to marry, he had rather have one that hath wisdom and piety without wealth, than one that hath riches without wisdom and piety. He is more glad of an opportunity (in public or private) for the profit of his soul, than of a feast, or a good bargain, or an opportunity for some gain in worldly things ; Matt. vi. 20. 33.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same mind in the main. He valueth mercies and helps for his soul, above those for his body. But it is with less zeal, and more indifference ; and, therefore, is more easily and often drawn to the omitting of spiritual duties, and neglect of spiritual helps and mercies ; and goeth to them with more averse-ness, and as driven by necessity, and is much less sensible

of his loss, when he misseth of any such spiritual helps ; Luke x. 41, 42. Heb. x. 25. Acts ii. 42. iv. 32.

3. But the seeming Christian being a real worldling, doth serve God and mammon ; and mammon with the first and best. He had rather miss a sermon, than a good bargain or commodity ; he had rather dwell where he may thrive best, or have most ease and pleasure, than where he may find the greatest helps for heaven ; he will be religious, but it must be with an easy, and a pleasant, and a merry religion, which may not be too niggardly with his flesh, nor use it too strictly : unless when one day's austerity may procure him an indulgence for his liberty all the week following. He will make his bargain with Christ so, as to be sure that he may not lose by him ; and he will not believe that God is pleased with that which is much displeasing to his flesh ; Rom. viii. 5—8. 13. Matt. xiii. 21, 22.

XVIII. 1. The Christian indeed is one that is crucified to the world, and the world is as a crucified thing to him ; Gal. vi. 14. He hath overcome the world by faith, and followeth Christ in the pursuit of it, to a perfect conquest ; 1 John v. 4, 5. 2 John xvi. 33. He has seen through all its glossing vanity, and foreseen what it will prove at last. He hath found that it cannot quiet conscience, nor reconcile the guilty soul to God, nor save it from his consuming wrath ; nor serve instead of God or heaven, of Christ or grace ; but will cast off its servants in their last extremity, naked and desolate, into remediless despair. And, therefore, he is resolvedly at a point with all things under the sun. Let them take the world for their portion and felicity that will ; for his part, he accounteth all things in it dung and dross, in comparison of Christ and things eternal ; Phil. iii. 7, 8. 19, 20. All the preferments, and honours, and command, and wealth, and greatness of the world, do not seem to him a bait considerable, to make a wise man once question whether he should persevere in faithfulness to God, or to tempt him to commit one wilful sin. He would not speak, or own a lie, or approve the sin of another, for all that worldlings enjoy in their greatest prosperity while they live. He accounteth his peace with God and conscience, and his communion with Christ in the greatest poverty, to be incomparably better than all the pleasures and commodities of sin ; yea, the very reproach of Christ is better to

him than all the treasures of court or country ; Heb. xi. 25, 26. Grace hath mortified and annihilated the world to him. And that which is dead and nothing, can do nothing with him against God and his soul. He looketh on it as a car-
rion, which dogs may love and fight for, but is unfit to be the food of man. He is going to the land of promise, and therefore will not contend for an inheritance in this howling wilderness. Whether he be high or low, rich or poor, are so small a part of his concernments, that he is almost indifferent to them, farther than as the interest of God and souls may accidentally be concerned in them. The world set against God, and heaven, and holiness, doth weigh no more in his estimation, than a feather that is put in the balance against a mountain, or all the world. He feeleth no great force in such temptations, as would draw him to win the world, and lose his soul. His eye and heart are where his God and treasure are, above; and worldly wealth and greatness are below him, even under his feet. He thinketh not things temporal worth the looking at, in comparison of things eternal; 2 Cor. iv. 18. He thinketh that their money and riches do deservedly perish with them, who think all the money in the world to be a thing comparable with grace; Acts viii. 20.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same judgment and resolution in the main; but yet the world retaineth a greater interest in his heart; it grieveth him more to lose it; it is a stronger temptation to him. To deny all the preferments, and honours, and riches of it, seemeth a greater matter to him; and he doth it with more striving, and less ease; and sometimes the respect of worldly things prevai-leth with him in lesser matters, to wound his conscience, and maketh work for repentance; and such are so entangled in worldly cares, and prosperity tasteth so sweet with them, that grace even languisheth and fall-eth into a consumption, and almost into a swoon. So much do some such let out their hearts to the world, which they renounced, and scrape for it with so much care and eagerness, and contend with others about their commodities and rights, that they seem to the standers by to be as worldly as worldlings themselves are; and become a shame to their profession, and make ungodly persons say, ‘ Your godly professors are as covetous as any :’ 2 Tim. iv. 10.

3. But seeming Christians are the servants of the world ; when they have learnt to speak most hardly of it, it hath their hearts. Heaven, as I said before, is valued but as a reserve, when they know they can keep the world no longer. They have more sweet and pleasing thoughts and speeches of the world, than they have of God and the world to come. It hath most of their hearts when God is most preferred by their tongues. There it is that they are daily laying up their treasure, and there they must leave it at the parting hour, when they go naked out as they came naked in. The love of deceitful riches choaketh the word of God, and it withereth in them, and becometh unfruitful ; Matt. xiii. 22. They go away sorrowful because of their beloved riches, when they should part with all for the hopes of heaven (Luke xviii. 23.), yea, though they are beggars, that never have a day's prosperity in the world, for all that, they love it better than heaven, and desire that which they cannot get, because they have not an eye of faith, to see that better world which they neglect, and therefore take it for an uncertain thing. Nor are their carnal natures suitable to it, and therefore they mind it not ; Rom. viii. 7. When a hypocrite is at the best, he is but a religious worldling ; the world is nearer to his heart than God is, but " pure religion keepeth a man unspotted of the world ;" James i. 27.

XIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that still seeth the end in all that he doth, and that is before him in his way ; and looketh not at things as at the present they seem or relish to the flesh, or to short-sighted men ; but as they will appear and be judged of at last. The first letter maketh not the word, nor the first word the sentence, without the last. Present time is quickly past, and therefore he less regardeth what things seem at present, than what they will prove to all eternity. When temptations offer him a bait to sin, with the present profit, or pleasure, or honour, he seeth at once the final shame ; he seeth all worldly things as they are seen by a dying man, and as after the general conflagration they will be. He seeth the godly man in his adversity and patience, as entering into his Master's joys ; he seeth the derided, vilified saint, as ready to stand justified by Christ at his right hand ; and the liars of the malicious world as ready to cover themselves with shame. He seeth the wicked in the height of their prosperity, as ready to be cut down and

withered, and their pampered flesh to turn to dirt ; and their filthy and malicious souls to stand condemned by Christ at his left hand ; and to hear, “ Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ;” Matt. xxv. 1 Pet. i. 24. James i. 10, 11. Psal. lxxiii. xxxvii. Therefore it is that he valueth grace, because he knoweth what it will be ; and therefore it is that he flieth from sin, because he “ knoweth the terrors of the Lord,” and what it will prove to the sinner in the end ; and how sinners themselves will curse the day that ever they did commit it ; and wish when it is too late, that they had chosen the holiness and patience of the saints. And therefore it is that he pitieth rather than envieth the prosperous enemies of the church, because he foreseeeth what the “ end will be of them that obey not the Gospel of Christ. And if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear ?” 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. 2 Thess. i. 8—10. If the wicked unbelievers saw but the ending of all things as he doth, they would be all then of his mind and way. This putteth so much life into his prayers, his obedience, and patience, because he seeth the end in all ; Deut. xxxii. 29. Prov. xix. 20. Isa. xlvi. 7.

2. And the weakest Christian doth the same in the main, so far as to turn his heart from things temporal to things eternal ; and to resolve him in his main choice, and to conduct the course of his life towards heaven. But yet in particular actions he is often stopped in present things, and forgetfully loseth the sight of the end, and so is deluded and enticed into sin, for want of seeing that which should have preserved him. He is like one that travelleth over hills and vallies, who when he is upon the hills doth see the place that he is going to ; but when he cometh into the vallies it is out of his sight. Too oft doth the weak Christian think of things as they appear at the present, with little sense of the change that is near. When he seeth the baits of sin, whether riches, or beauty, or meat and drink, or any thing that is pleasing to the senses, the remembrance of the end doth not so quickly and powerfully work, to prevent his deceived imaginations as it ought. And when poverty, or shame, or sufferings, or sickness are presented to him, the foresight of the end is not so speedy and powerful in clearing his judgment, and settling his resolution, and preventing his misapprehension and troubles as it ought. And

hence comes his oft mistakes and falls ; and herein consisteth much of that foolishness, which he confesseth when repentance bringeth him to himself ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

3. But the seeming Christian hath so dim and doubtful a foresight of the end, and it is so frequently out of his mind, that things present do carry away his heart, and have the greatest power and interest with him ; and are most regarded and sought after in this life. For he is purblind, not seeing afar off, as it is said, 2 Pet. i. 9. He wanteth that faith which is the “ substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen ;” Heb. xi. 1. Things promised in another world seem to him too uncertain, or too far off to be preferred before all the happiness of this world ; he is resolved to make his best of that which he hath in hand, and to prefer possession before such hopes. Little doth his heart perceive what a change is near, and how the face of all things will be altered ! How sin will look, and how the minds of sinners will be changed, and what all the riches, and pleasures, and honours of the world will appear at the latter end ! He foreseeth not the day when the slothful, and the worldly, and the fleshly, and the proud, and the enemies of godliness, shall all wish in vain, ‘ O that we had laid up our treasure in heaven, and laboured for the food that perisheth not, and had set less by all the vanities of the world, and had imitated the holiest and most mortified believers !’ Though the hypocrite can himself foretel all this, and talk of it to others, yet his belief of it is so dead, and his sensuality so strong, that he liveth by sense, and not by that belief : and present things are practically preferred by him, and bear the sway, so that he needeth those warnings of God as well as the profane, “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, and that they would consider their latter end ;” Deut. xxxii. 29. And he is one of the foolish ones (Matt. xxv. 8. 11.), who are seeking oil for their lamps when it is too late, and are crying out, “ Lord, Lord, open to us,” when the door is shut ; and will not know the time of their visitation, nor know effectually in this their day, the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

XX. 1. The Christian indeed is one that liveth upon God alone ; his faith is divine ; his love, and obedience, and confidence are divine ; his chiefest converse is divine ; his

hopes and comforts are divine. As it is God that he dependeth on, and trusteth to, and studieth to please above all the world, so it is God's approbation that he taketh up with for his justification and reward. He took him for his absolute Governor and Judge, and full felicity, in the day when he took him for his God. He can live in peace without man's approbation. If men are never acquainted with his sincerity, or virtues, or good deeds, it doth not discourage him nor hinder him from his holy course ; he is, therefore, the same in secret as in public, because no place is secret from God. If men turn his greatest virtues or duties to his reproach, and slander him, and make him odious to men, and represent him as they did Paul, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, and the ringleader of a sect, and make him as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, this changeth him not, for it changeth not his felicity, nor doth he miss of his reward ; 1 Cor. iv. 9—14. Read the words in the text. Though he hath so much suspicion of his own understanding, and reverence for wiser men's, that he will be glad to learn, and will hear reason from any one ; yet praise and dispraise are matters of very small regard with him ; and as to himself, he counteth it but a very small thing to be judged of men, whether they justify or condemn him ; because they are fallible, and have not the power of determining any thing to his great commodity or detriment ; nor is it their judgment to which he stands or falls ; 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He hath a more dreadful, or comfortable judgment to prepare for. Man is of small account with him in comparison of God ; Rom. viii. 33—36.

2. And though with the weakest true Christian it is so also as to the predominancy of God's esteem and interest in him, yet is his weakness daily visible in the culpable effects. Though God have the chiefest place in his esteem, yet man hath much more than his due. The thoughts and words of men seem to such, of far greater importance than they should. Praise and dispraise, favours and injuries, are things which affect their hearts too much ; they bear not the contempts and wrongs of men with so quiet and satisfied a mind, as beseemeth those that live upon God. They have so small an experience of the comforts of God in Christ, that they are tasting the deeper of other delights, and spare them not so easily as they ought to do. God, without

friends, or house, or land, or maintenance, or esteem in the world, doth not fully quiet them; but there is a deal of peevish impatience left in their minds, though it doth not drive them away from God.

3. But the seeming Christian can better take up with the world alone than with God alone; God is not so much missed by him as the world; he always breaks with Christ, when it cometh to forsaking all; he is godly notionally and professedly, and therefore may easily say that God is his portion, and enough for those that put their trust in him; but his heart never consented truly to reduce these words to practice. When it comes to the trial, the praise or dispraise of man, and the prosperity or matters of the world, do signify more with him than the favour or displeasure of God, and can do more with him. Christ, and riches, and esteem, he could be content with; but he cannot away with a naked Christ alone. Therefore he is indeed a practical atheist, even when he seemeth most religious: for if he had ever taken God for his God indeed, he had certainly taken him as his portion, felicity, and all; and therefore as enough for him without the creature; Luke xviii. 23.

XXI. 1. For all this it followeth, that a Christian indeed hath with himself devoted all that he hath to God, and so all that he hath is sanctified: he is only in doubt oftentimes in particular cases, what God would have him do with himself and his estate; but never in doubt whether they are to be wholly employed for God, in obedience to his will, as far as he can know it; and therefore doth estimate every creature and condition, purely as it relateth unto God and life eternal. "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" is written upon all that he hath and doth: he taketh it as sent from God, and useth it as his Master's goods and talents; not chiefly for himself, but for his Master's ends and will. God appeareth to him in the creature, and is the life, and sweetness, and glory of the creature to him. His first question in every business he undertaketh, or every place or condition that he chooseth is, how it conduceth to the pleasing of God, and to his spiritual ends; "whether he eateth or drinketh, or whatever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God; 1 Cor. x. 31. The posy engraven on his heart is the name of GOD, with "OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM

ARE ALL THINGS, TO HIM BE GLORY FOR EVER, AMEN;" Rom. xi. 36. He liveth as a steward that useth not his own, though yet he have a sufficient reward for his fidelity; and he keepeth accounts both of his receivings and layings out, and reckoneth all to be worse than lost, which he findeth not expended on his Lord's account. For himself he asketh not that which is sweetest to the flesh, but that which is fittest to his end and work; and therefore desireth not riches (for himself) but his daily bread, and food convenient for him; and having food and raiment is therewith content, having taken godliness for his gain. He asketh not for superfluity, nor for any thing to consume it on his lusts, nor to become provision for his flesh, to satisfy the wills thereof. But as a runner in his race desireth not any provisions which may hinder him; and therefore "forgetting the things which are behind (the world which he hath turned his back upon,) he reacheth forth to the things which are before, (the crown of glory,) and presseth toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" not turning an eye to any thing that would stop him in his course. Thus while he is employed about things below, his mind and conversation are heavenly and divine, while all things are estimated and used purely for God and heaven; Luke xvi. 1, 2. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Tit. i. 15. Prov. xxx. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 6. 8. James iv. 3. Rom. xiii. 14. Phil. iii. 13—15.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have all this in desire, and be thus affected and resolved in the main, and liveth to God in the scope and course of his life, yet is too often looking aside, and valuing the creature carnally for itself; and oftentimes useth it for the pleasing of the flesh, and almost like a common man; his house, and land, and friends, and pleasures, are relished too carnally, as his own accommodations; and though he walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, yet he hath too much of the fleshly taste, and is greatly out in his accounts with God; and turneth many a thing from his Master's use, to the service of the flesh; and though he be not as the slothful, wicked servant, yet is it but little improvement that he maketh of his talent; Matt. xxv. 17. 26—28.

3. But the seeming Christian being carnal and selfish, while his notions and professions are spiritual and Divine,

and his selfish and fleshly interest being predominant, it must needs follow that he estimateth all things principally as they respect his fleshly interest, and useth them principally for his carnal self, even when in the manner he seemeth to use them most religiously, (as I have said before;) and so to the defiled nothing is pure; Rom. viii. 5—8. 13. Tit. i. 15.

XXII. 1. A Christian indeed hath a promptitude to obey, and a ready compliance of his will to the will of God. He hath not any great averseness and withdrawing, and doth not the good which he doth with much backwardness and striving against it; but as in a well-ordered watch or clock, the spring or poise doth easily set all the wheels a going, and the first wheel easily moveth the rest; so is the will of a confirmed Christian presently moved, as soon as he knoweth the will of God. He stayeth not for other moving reasons; God's will is his reason. This is the habit of subjection and obedience, which makes him say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and "Lord, what wouldst thou have me do?" And "Teach me to do thy will, O God;" Psal. cxliii. 10. 1 Sam. iii. 10. Acts ix. 6. "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea thy law is within my heart;" Psal. xl. 8. The "law written in our heart," is nothing else but the knowledge of God's laws, with this habit or promptitude to obey them; the special fruit of the Spirit of grace.

2. But a weak Christian, though he love God's will and way, and be sincerely obedient to him, yet in many particulars, where his corruption contradicteth, hath a great deal of backwardness and striving of the flesh against the Spirit; and there needs many words, and many considerations and vehement persuasions, yea, and sharp afflictions, sometimes, to bring him to obey. And he is fain to drive on his backward heart, and hath frequent use for the rod and spur, and therefore is more slow and uneven in his obedience; Gal. v. 17.

3. The seeming Christian is forward in those easy, cheaper parts of duty, which serve to delude his carnal heart, and quiet him in a worldly life; but he is so backward to thorough sincere obedience in the most flesh-displeasing parts of duty, that he is never brought to it at all; but either he will fit his opinions in religion to his will, and will not believe them to be duties, or else he will do something like them in a superficial, formal way; but the thing itself he

will not do. For he is more obedient to his carnal mind and lusts than he is to God; Rom. viii. 6, 7. and forwarder much to sacrifice than obedience; Eccles. v. 1.

XXIII. 1. A Christian indeed doth daily delight himself in God, and findeth more solid content and pleasure in his commands and promises, than in all this world; his duties are sweet to him, and his hopes are sweeter. Religion is not a tiresome task to him; the yoke of Christ is easy to him, and his burden light, and his commandments are not grievous; Psal. xxxvii. 4. i. 2. xl. 8. xciv. 19. cxix. 16. 35. 47. 70. Matt. xi. 28, 29. John v. 3. That which others take as physic, for mere necessity, against their wills, he goeth to as a feast, with appetite and delight; he prayeth because he loveth to pray; and he thinks and speaks of holy things, because he loveth to do it. And hence it is that he is so much in holy duty, and so unwearied, because he loveth it, and taketh pleasure in it. As voluptuous persons are oft and long at their sports, or merry company, because they love them, and take pleasure in them: so are such Christians oft and long in holy exercises, because their hearts are set upon them as their recreation, and the way and means of their felicity. If it be a delight to a studious man to read those books which most clearly open the abstrusest mysteries of the sciences, or to converse with the most wise and learned men; and if it be a delight to men to converse with their dearest friends, or to hear from them and read their letters; no marvel if it be a delight to a Christian indeed, to read the Gospel mysteries of love, and to find there the promises of everlasting happiness, and to see in the face of Jesus Christ the clearest image of the Eternal Deity, and foresee the joys which he shall have for ever. He sticketh not in superficial formality, but breaking the shell doth feed upon the kernel. It is not bare external duty which he is taken up with, nor any mere creature that is his content; but it is God in creatures and ordinances that he seeketh and liveth upon; and therefore it is that religion is so pleasant to him. He would not change his heavenly delights which he findeth in the exercise of faith, and hope, and love to God, for all the carnal pleasures of this world; he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents or palaces of wickedness. A day in God's court is better to him than a thousand in the court of the greatest

prince on earth. He is not a stranger to "the joy in the Holy Ghost," in which the kingdom of God doth in part consist; Rom. xiv. 17. Psal. lxxxiv. 10. 2. lxxv. 4. "In the multitude of his thoughts within him, the comforts of God do delight his soul;" Psal. xciv. 19. "His meditation of God is sweet, and he is glad in the Lord;" Psal. civ. 34. The freest and sweetest of his thoughts and words run out upon God and the matters of salvation. The word of God is sweeter to him than honey, and better than thousands of gold and silver; Psal. xix. 10. cxix. 72. 103. Prov. xvi. 24. And because "his delight is in the law of the Lord, therefore doth he meditate in it day and night;" Psal. i. 2. He seeth great reason for all those commands, "Rejoice evermore;" (1 Thess. v. 16.) "Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice;" (Psal. lxviii. 3, 4. lxiv. 10. xxxi. 1. xxxii. 11.) "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy all that are upright in heart." He is sorry for the poor, unhappy world, that have no better things than meat, and drink, and clothes, and house, and land, and money, and lust, and play, and domineering over others, to rejoice in: and heartily he wisheth that they had but a taste of the saint's delights, that it might make them spit out their luscious, unclean, unwholesome pleasures. One look to Christ, one promise of the Gospel, one serious thought of the life which he must live with God for ever, doth afford his soul more solid comfort than all the kingdoms of the earth can afford. And though he live not continually in these high delights, yet peace with God, and peace of conscience, and some delight in God and godliness, is the ordinary temperature of his soul, and higher degrees are given him in season for his cordials and his feasts.

2. But the weak Christian hath little of these spiritual delights; his ordinary temper is to apprehend that God and his ways are indeed most delectable; his very heart acknowledgeth that they are worthiest and fittest to be the matter of his delights: and if he could attain assurance of his especial interest in the love of God, and his part in Christ and life eternal, he would then rejoice in them indeed, and would be more glad than if he were Lord of all the world; but in the meantime, either his fears and doubts are damping his delights; or else (which is much worse) his appetite is dull

and God and holiness relish not with him half so sweetly, as they do with the confirmed Christian ; and he is too busy in tasting of fleshly and forbidden pleasures, which yet more deprave his appetite, and dull his desires to the things of God ; so that though in his estimation, choice, resolution and endeavour, he much preferreth God before the world ; yet as to any delightful sweetness in him, it is but little that he tasteth. He loveth God with a desiring love, and with a seeking love, but with very little of a delighting love. The remnant of corrupt and alien affections do weaken his affections to the things above ; and his infant measure of spiritual life, conjunct with many troublesome diseases, allow him very little of the joy of the Holy Ghost. Nay, perhaps he hath more grief, and fear, and doubts, and trouble, and perplexity of mind, than ever he had before he turned unto God, and perhaps he hath yet less pleasure in God, than he had before in sin and sensuality : because he had his sin in a state of fruition, but he hath God only in a seeking, hoping state ; he hath the best of sin, and all that ever it will afford him ; but he hath yet none of the full felicity which he expecteth in God : the fruition of him is yet but in the prospect of hope. His sensual, sinful life was in its maturity, and the object present in its most alluring state ; but his spiritual life of faith and love, is but yet in its weak beginnings, and the object absent from our sight : he is so busy at first in blowing up his little spark, not knowing whether the fire will kindle or go out, that he hath little of the use or pleasure, either of its light or warmth. Infants come crying into the world, and afterwards oftener cry than laugh ; their senses and reason are not yet perfected, or exercised to partake of the pleasures of life : and when they do come to know what a laughter is, they will laugh and cry almost in a breath. And those weak Christians that do come to taste of joy and pleasure in their religious state, it is commonly but as a flash of lightning, which leaveth them as dark as they were before. Sometimes in the beginning, upon their first apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, and of the pardon of their sins, and the privileges of their new condition, and the hopes of everlasting joy, their hearts are transported with unspeakable delight ; which is partly from the newness of the thing, and partly because God will let them have some encouraging taste, to draw them further,

and to convince them of the difference between the pleasures of sin, and the comforts of believing ; but these first rejoicings soon abate, and turn into a life of doubts, and fears, and griefs, and care, till they are grown to greater understanding, experience, and settledness in the things of God ; the root must grow greater and deeper, before it will bear a greater top. Those Christians that in the weakness of grace have frequent joys, are usually persons whose weak and passionate nature doth occasion it : (some women especially) that have strong fancies and passions are always passionately affected with whatsoever they apprehend. And these are like a ship that is tossed in a tempest ; that is one while lifted up as to the clouds, and presently cast down as into an infernal gulf : there one day in great joy, and quickly after in as great perplexity and sorrow, because their comforts or sorrows do follow their present feeling, or mutable apprehensions. But when they come to be confirmed Christians, they will keep a more constant judgment of themselves, and their own condition, and constantly see their grounds of comfort ; and when they cannot raise their souls to any high and passionate joys, they yet walk in a settled peace of soul, and in such competent comforts, as make their lives to be easy and delightful ; being well pleased and contented with the happy condition that Christ hath brought them to, and thankful that he left them not in those foolish, vain, pernicious pleasures, which were the way to endless sorrows.

3. But the seeming Christian seeketh and taketh up his chief contentment in some carnal thing : if he be so poor and miserable as to have nothing in possession that can much delight him, he will hope for better days hereafter, and that hope shall be his chief delight ; or if he have no such hope he will be without delight, and shew his love to the world and flesh, by mourning for that which he cannot have, as others do in rejoicing in what they do possess ; and he will, in such a desperate case of misery, be such to the world as the weak Christian is to God, who hath a mourning and desiring love, when he cannot reach to an enjoying and delighting love. His carnal mind most savoureth the things of the flesh, and therefore in them he findeth or seeketh his delights. Though yet he may have also a delight in his superficial kind of religion, his hearing, and reading, and praying, and in his ill-grounded hopes of life eternal : but all this

is but subordinate to his chief, earthly pleasure ; “ Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God ; they ask of me the ordinances of justice ; they take delight in approaching unto God.” Isa. lviii. 2. And yet all this was subjected to a covetous, oppressing mind. “ He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended ;” Matt. xiii. 20. Whereby it appeareth that his love to the word, was subjected to his love to the world.

Object. ‘ But there are two sorts of people that seem to have no fleshly delights at all, and yet are not in the way to salvation, viz. the Quakers and Behmenists that live in great austerity, and some of the religious orders of the Papists, who afflict their flesh.’

Ans. Some of them undergo their fastings and penance for a day, that they may sin the more quietly all the week after ; and some of them proudly comfort themselves with the fancies and conceit of being and appearing more excellent in austerity than others ; and all these take up with a carnal sort of pleasure. As proud persons are pleased with their own, or other’s conceits of their beauty, or wit, or worldly greatness ; so prouder persons are pleased with their own and other’s conceits of their holiness. And “ verily they have their reward ;” Matt. vi. 2. But those of them that place their chief happiness in the love of God, and the eternal fruition of him in heaven, and seek this sincerely according to their helps and power, though they are misled into some superstitious errors, I hope I may number with those that are sincere ; for all their errors and the ill effects of them.

XXIV. 1. A confirmed Christian doth ordinarily discern the sincerity of his own heart, and consequently hath some well-grounded assurance of the pardon of his sins, and of the favour of God, and of his everlasting happiness ; and therefore no wonder if he live a peaceable and joyful life. For his grace is not so small as to be undiscernible, nor is it as a sleepy, buried seed or principle ; but it is almost of continual act ; and they that have a great degree of grace,

also keep it in lively exercise, do seldom doubt of it. Besides that they blot not their evidence by so many infirmities and falls. They are more in the light, and have more acquaintance with themselves, and more sense of the abundant love of God, and of his exceeding mercies, than weak Christians have ; and therefore must needs have more assurance. They have boldness of access to the throne of grace, without unreverent contempt ; Ephes. iii. 12. ii. 18. They have more of the spirit of adoption, and therefore more child-like confidence in God, and can call him Father with greater freedom and comfort than any others can ; Rom. viii. 15, 16. Gal. iv. 6. Ephes. i. 6. 1 John v. 19, 20. “ And we know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness :” &c.

2. But the weak Christian hath so small a degree of grace, and so much corruption, and his grace is so little in act, and his sin so much, that he seldom if ever attaineth to any well-grounded assurance, till he attain to a greater measure of grace. He differeth so little from the seeming Christian, that neither himself nor others do certainly discern the difference. When he searcheth after the truth of his faith, and love, and heavenly-mindedness, he findeth so much unbelief and averseness from God, and earthly-mindedness, that he cannot be certain which of them is predominant ; and whether the interest of this world or that to come, do bear the sway. So that he is often in perplexities and fears, and more often in a dull uncertainty. And if he seem at any time to have assurance, it is usually but an ill-grounded persuasion of the truth ; though it be true which he apprehendeth, when he taketh himself to be the child of God, yet it is upon unsound reasons that he judgeth so, or else upon sound reasons weakly and uncertainly discerned ; so that there is commonly much of security, presumption, fancy, or mistake, in his greatest comforts. He is not yet in a condition fit for full assurance, till his love and obedience be more full.

3. But the seeming Christian cannot possibly in that estate, have either certainty, or good probability that he is a child of God, because it is not true : his seeming certainty is merely self-deceit, and his greatest confidence is but presumption, because the spirit of Christ is not within him, and therefore he is certainly none of his ; Rom. viii. 9.

XXV. 1. The assurance of a confirmed Christian doth

increase his alacrity and diligence in duty, and is always seen in his more obedient, holy, fruitful life. The sense of the love and mercy of God, is as the rain upon the tender grass : he is never so fruitful, so thankful, so heavenly, as when he hath the greatest certainty that he shall be saved. The love of God is then shed abroad upon his heart by the Holy Ghost, which maketh him abound in love to God ; Rom. v. 1—4. He is the more stedfast, immoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, when he is most certain that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord ; 1 Cor. xv. 58.

2. But the weak Christian is unfit yet to manage assurance well, and therefore it is that it is not given him ; graces must grow proportionably together. If he be but confidently persuaded that he is justified and shall be saved, he is very apt to gather some consequence from it, that tendeth to security and to the remitting of his watchfulness and care. He is ready to be the bolder with sin, and stretch his conscience, and omit some duties, and take more fleshly liberty and ease, and think, ‘ Now I am a child of God, I am out of danger, I am sure I cannot totally fall away.’ And though his judgment conclude not, ‘ therefore I may venture further upon worldly, fleshly pleasures, and need not be so strict and diligent as I was,’ yet his heart and practice thus conclude. And he is most obedient when he is most in fear of hell, and he is worst in his heart and life, when he is most confident that all his danger is past ; Heb. iv. 1, 2. iii. 14—16.

3. But the seeming Christian, though he have no assurance, is hardened in his carnal state by his presumption. Had he but assurance to be saved without a holy life, he would cast off that very image of godliness which he yet retaineth. The conceit of his own sincerity and salvation, is that which deludeth and undoeth him. What sin would not gain, or pleasure draw him to commit, if he were but sure to be forgiven ? It is fear of hell that causeth that seeming religion which he hath ; and therefore if that fear be gone all is gone ; and all his piety, and diligence, and righteousness, is come to nought ; Gal. vi. 3. John viii. 39. 42. 44.

XXVI. 1. For all his assurance, a confirmed Christian is so well acquainted with his manifold imperfections, and daily failings, and great unworthiness, that he is very low and

vile in his own eyes ; and, therefore, can easily endure to be low and vile in the eyes of others. He hath a constant sense of the burden of his remaining sin ; especially he doth even abhor himself, when he findeth the averseness of his own heart to God, and how little he knoweth of him, and how little he loveth him, in comparison of what he ought ; and how little of heaven is upon his heart, and how strange and backward his thoughts are to the life to come. These are as fetters upon his soul. He daily groaneth under them as a captive, that he should be yet so carnal, and unable to shake off the remnant of his infirmities, as if he were sold under sin ; that is, in bondage to it ; Rom. vii. 14. He hateth himself more for the imperfections of his love and obedience to God, than hypocrites do for their reigning sin. And O how he longeth for the day of his deliverance ; Rom. vii. 24. He thinketh it no great injury for another to judge of him as he judgeth of himself, even to be less than the least of all God's mercies. He is more troubled for being overpraised and overvalued, than for being dispraised and vilified ; as thinking those that praise him are more mistaken, and lay the more dangerous snare for his soul. For he hath a special antipathy to pride ; and wondereth that any rational man can be so blind as not to see enough to humble him. For his own part (in the midst of all God's graces) he seeth in himself so much darkness, imperfection, corruption, and want of further grace, that he is loathsome and burdensome continually to himself. If you see him sad, or troubled, and ask him the cause, it is ten to one but it is himself that he complaineth of. The frowardest wife, the most undutiful child, the most disobedient servant, the most injurious neighbour, the most malicious enemy, is not half so great a trouble to him as he is to himself. He prayeth abundantly more against his own corruption, than against any of these. O could he but know and love God more, and be more in heaven, and willing to die, and freer from his own distempers, how easily could he bear all crosses, or injuries from others. He came to Christ's school as a little child (Matt. xviii. 3.), and still he is little in his own esteem ; and, therefore, disesteem and contempt from others, is no great matter with him. He thinks it can be no great wrong that is done against so poor a worm, and so unworthy a sinner as himself, (except as God or the souls of men may

be interested in the cause). He heartily approveth of the justice of God, in abhorring the proud; and hath learned that, Rom. xii. 10., "in honour preferring one another," and Gal. v. 26. "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

2. But the remnant of pride is usually the most notable sin of the weak Christian; though it reigneth not, it foully blemisheth him: he would fain be taken for somebody in the church; he is ready to step up into a higher room, and to think himself wiser and better than he is. If he can but speak confidently of the principles of religion, and some few controversies which he hath made himself sick with, he is ready to think himself fit to be a preacher. He looketh through a magnifying-glass upon all his own performances and gifts; he loveth to be valued and praised; he can hardly bear to be slighted and dispraised, but is ready to think hardly of those that do it, if not to hate them in some degree: he loveth not to be found fault with, though it be necessary to his amendment; and though all this vice of pride be not so predominant in him, as to conquer his humility, yet doth it much obscure and interrupt it. And though he hate this his pride, and strive against it, and lamenteth it before God, yet still it is the sorest ulcer in his soul. And should it prevail and overcome him, he would be abhorred of God, and it would be his ruin; 2 Chron. xvi. 10. 12. Luke xxii. 24—26.

3. But in the hypocrite pride is the reigning sin. The praise of men is the air which he liveth in. He was never well acquainted with himself; and never felt aright the burden of his sins and wants; and, therefore, cannot bear contempt from others. Indeed, if his corrupt disposition turn most to the way of covetousness, tyranny, or lust, he can the easier bear contempt from others, as long as he hath his will at home; and he can spare their love, if he can be but feared and domineer. But still his pride is predominant; and when it affecteth not much the reputation of goodness, it affecteth the name of being rich or great. Sin may make him sordid, but grace doth not make him humble. Pride is the vital spirit of the corrupted state of man.

XXVII. 1. A confirmed Christian is acquainted with the deceitfulness of man's heart, and the particular corrupt inclinations that are in it; and especially with his own; and

he is acquainted with the wiles and methods of the tempter, and what are the materials which he maketh his baits of, and what is the manner in which he spreadeth his nets. He seeth always some snares before him; and what company soever he is in, or what business soever he is about, he walketh as among snares, which are visible to his sight; and it is part of his business continually to avoid them. He liveth in a continual watch and warfare. He can resist much stronger and more subtle temptations than the weak can do. He is always armed, and knoweth what are the special remedies against each particular snare and sin; Eph. vi. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Prov. i. 17. And he carrieth always his antidotes about him, as one that liveth in an infectious world, and in the midst of a froward, and perverse generation, from which he is charged to save himself; Phil. ii. 15. Acts ii. 40.

2. And the weak Christian is a soldier in the army of Christ, and is engaged in striving against sin (Heb. xii. 4.); and really taketh the flesh and world, as well as the devil, to be his enemies, and doth not only strive, but conquer in the main; but yet, alas, how poorly is he armed: how unskilful doth he manage his Christian armour: how often is he foiled and wounded: how many a temptation is he much unacquainted with: and how many a snare doth lie before him which he never did observe. And oft he is overcome in particular temptations, when he never perceiveth it, but thinks that he hath conquered.

3. But the hypocrite is fast ensnared when he glorieth most of his integrity, and is deceived by his own heart, and thinketh he is something, when he is nothing; Gal. vi. 3. Luke xviii. 20—23. When he is thanking God that he is not as other men, he is rejoicing in his dreams, and sacrificing for the victory which he never obtained; ver. 11. He is led by satan captive at his will, when he is boasting of his uprightness, and hath a beam of covetousness, or pride, or cruelty in his own eye, while he is reviling, or censuring another for the mote of some difference about a ceremony, or tolerable opinion. And usually such grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; Matt. vii. 3—5. 2 Tim. iii. 13.

XXVIII. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that hath deliberately counted what it may cost him to follow Christ, and to save his soul; and knowing that suffering with Christ is

the way to our reigning with him, he hath fully consented to the terms of Christ. He hath read Luke xiv. 26, 27. 33. and findeth that bearing the cross and forsaking all, is necessary to those that will be Christ's disciples. And accordingly in resolution he hath forsaken all; and looketh not for a smooth and easy way to heaven. He considereth that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution," and that "through many tribulations we must enter into heaven." And, therefore, he taketh it not for a strange or unexpected thing, if the fiery trial come upon him. He doth not wonder at the unrighteousness of the world, as if he expected reason or honesty, justice or truth, or mercy in the enemies of Christ, and the instruments of satan: he will not bring his action against the devil, for unjustly afflicting him: he will rather turn the other cheek to him that smiteth him, than he will hinder the good of any soul by seeking right; much less will he exercise unjust revenge. Though where government is exercised for truth and righteousness, he will not refuse to make use of the justice of it to punish iniquity, and discourage evil doers, yet this is for God and the common good, and for the suppression of sin, much more than for himself. Suffering doth not surprise him as a thing unlooked for: he hath been long preparing for it, and it findeth him garrisoned in the love of Christ. Yea, though his flesh will be as the flesh of others, sensible of the smart, and his mind is not senseless of the sufferings of his body, yet it is some pleasure and satisfaction to his soul, to find himself in the common way to heaven, and to see the predictions of Christ fulfilled, and to feel himself so far conform to Jesus Christ his head, and to trace the footsteps of a humbled Redeemer in the way before him. As "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh," so doth the Christian arm himself with the same mind; 1 Pet. iv. 1. "He rejoiceth that he is made partaker of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, he may also be partaker of the exceeding joy;" ver. 12, 13. Yea, he taketh the reproach of Christ for a treasure, yea, a greater treasure than riches, or men's favours can afford; Heb. xi. 25, 26. For he knoweth if he be reproached for the name or sake of Christ he is happy. For thereby he glorifieth that God, whom the enemy doth blaspheme, and so the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on him; 1 Pet. iv. 14. He liveth and suffereth as one

that from his heart believeth, that “they are blessed that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for great is their reward in heaven. And they are blessed when men shall revile them and persecute them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely for Christ’s sake.” In this they “rejoice and are exceeding glad,” as knowing that herein they are “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise;” Matt. v. 10—12. Heb. vi. 12. If he be “offered upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of God’s elect, he can rejoice in it as having greater good than evil; Phil. ii. 17. He can suffer the loss of all things, and account them dung, that he may “win Christ, and be found in him, and know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death;” Phil. iii. 8—10. Not out of surliness and pride doth he rejoice in sufferings, as some do, that they may carry the reputation of holy and undaunted men; and seem to be far better, and more constant than others. When pride maketh men suffer, they are partly the devil’s martyrs though the cause be never so good. Though it is much more ordinary for pride to make men suffer rejoicingly in an ill cause than in a good; the devil having more power on his own ground than on Christ’s. But it is the love of Christ, and the belief of the reward, and the humble neglect of the mortified flesh, and the contempt of the conquered world, that maketh the Christian suffer with so much joy; for he seeth that the Judge is at the door, and what torments the wicked are preparing for themselves; and that as certainly as there is a God that governeth the world, and that in righteousness, so certainly are his eyes upon the righteous, and his face is set against them that do evil (1 Pet. iii. 12), and though “sinners do evil a hundred times,” and escape unpunished till their days be prolonged, yet vengeance will overtake them in due time, and it shall be well with them that fear the Lord; and that he keepeth all the tears of his servants till the reckoning day. And if “judgment begin at the house of God, and the righteous be saved through so much suffering and labour, what then shall be their end, that obey not the Gospel? and where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?” 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. Eccles. viii. 12. Prov. xi. 31. xiii. 6. Psal. lvi. 8. Deut. xxxii. 35. James v. 9.

2. And the weak Christian is one that will forsake all for

the sake of Christ, and suffer with him that he may be glorified with him; and will take his treasure in heaven for all; Luke xiv. 26, 33. xviii. 22. But he doth it not with that easiness, and alacrity, and joy, as the confirmed Christian doth. He hearkens more to the flesh, which saith, 'favour thyself.' Suffering is much more grievous to him; and sometimes he is wavering before he can bring himself fully to resolve, and let go all; Matt. xvi. 22.

3. But the seeming Christian looketh not for much suffering: he reads of it in the Gospel, but he saw no probability of it, and never believed that he should be called to it in any notable degree: he thought it probable that he might well escape it, and therefore, though he agreed verbally to take Christ for better and worse, and to follow him through sufferings, he thought he would never put him to it. And indeed his heart is secretly resolved, that he will never be undone in the world for Christ. Some reparable loss he may undergo, but he will not let go life and all. He will still be religious and hope for heaven; but he will make himself believe (and others if he can) that the truth lieth on the safer side, and not on the suffering side; and that it is but for their own conceits, and scrupulosity, that other men suffer who go beyond him; and that many good men are of his opinion, and therefore he may be good also in the same opinion (though he would never have been of that opinion, if it had not been necessary to his escaping of sufferings) what flourish soever he maketh for a time, "when persecution ariseth he is offended and withereth;" Matt. xiii. 21. 26. Unless he be so deeply engaged among the suffering party, that he cannot come off without perpetual reproach; and then perhaps pride will make him suffer more than the belief of heaven, or the love of Christ could do. And all this is, because his very belief is unrooted, and unsound, and he hath secretly at the heart a fear, that if he should suffer death for Christ, he should be a loser by him, and he would not reward him according to his promise, with everlasting life; Heb. iii. 12.

XXIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that followeth not Christ for company, nor holdeth his belief in trust upon the credit of any in the world, and therefore he would stick to Christ, if all that he knoweth or converseth with should forsake him. If the rulers of the earth should change their

religion, and turn against Christ, he would not forsake him. If the multitude of the people turn against him ; nay, if the professors of godliness should fall off, yet would he stand his ground and be still the same. If the most learned men, and the pastors of the church should turn from Christ, he would not forsake him. Yea, if his nearest relations and friends, or even that minister that was the means of his conversion, should change their minds, and forsake the truth, and turn from Christ, or a holy life, he would yet be constant, and be still the same. And what Peter resolved on, he would truly practise : " Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet would not I be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee ; " Matt. xxvi. 33. 35. And if he thought himself, as Elias did, left alone, yet would he not bow the knee to Baal ; Rom. xi. 3. If he hear that this eminent minister falleth off one day, and the other another day, till all be gone, yet still the foundation of God standeth sure ; he falleth not because he is built upon the rock ; Matt. vii. 22, 23. His heart saith, ' Alas, whither shall I go, if I go from Christ ? Is there any other that hath the word and Spirit of eternal life ? Can I be a gainer if I lose my soul ? ' John vi. 67, 68. Matt. xvi. 26. He useth his teachers to bring him that light and evidence of truth, which dwelleth in him when they are gone : and, therefore, though they fall away, he falleth not with them.

2. And the weakest Christian believeth with a divine faith of his own, and dependeth more on God than man : but yet if he should be put to so great a trial, as to see all the pastors and Christians that he knoweth, change their minds, I know not what he would do : for though God will uphold all his own, whom he will save, yet he doth it by means and outward helps, together with his internal grace ; and keepeth them from temptations, when he will deliver them from the evil ; and therefore it is a doubt, whether there be not degrees of grace so weak, as would fail, in case the strongest temptations were permitted to assault them. A strong man can stand and go of himself, but an infant must be carried ; and the lame and sick must have others to support them. The weak Christian falleth, if his teacher or most esteemed company fall : if they run into an error, sect

or schism, he keeps them company. He groweth cold, if he have not warming company: he forgetteth himself, and letteth loose his sense and passion, if he have not some to watch over him and warn him. No man should refuse the help of others, that can have it; and the best have need of all God's means: but the weak Christian needeth them much more than the strong, and is much less able to stand without them; Luke xxii. 32. Gal. ii. 11—14.

3. But the seeming Christian is built upon the sand, and therefore cannot stand a storm; he is a Christian more for company, or the credit of man, or the interest that others have in him, or the encouragement of the times, than from a firm belief and love of Christ, and therefore falleth when his props are gone; Matt. vii. 24.

XXX. 1. A strong Christian can digest the hardest truths, and the hardest works of Providence: he seeth more of the reason and evidence of truths than others; and he hath usually a more comprehensive knowledge, and can reconcile those truths which short-sighted persons suspect to be inconsistent and contradictory, and when he cannot reconcile them, he knoweth they are reconcilable: for he hath laid his foundation well, and then he reduceth other truths to that, and buildeth them on it: and so he doth by the hardest providences: whoever is high or low, whoever prospereth or is afflicted, however human affairs are carried, and all things seem to go against the church and cause of Christ, he knoweth yet that God is good to Israel, (Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2.) and that he is the "righteous Judge of all the earth;" and that the "righteous shall have dominion in the morning," and "it shall go well with them that fear the Lord;" for he goeth into the sanctuary, and foreseeth the end; Eccles. viii. 11—13. Psal. lxxiii. 17. cxv. 11. 13. xxxi. 19.

2. But the weak Christian is very hard put to it, when he meeteth with difficult passages of Scripture, and when he seeth it "go with the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and with the wicked according to the work of the righteous;" Eccles. viii. 14. Though he is not overturned by such difficulties, yet his foot is ready to slip, and he digesteth them with much perplexity and trouble.

3. But the seeming, unsettled Christian is often overcome by them, and turneth away from Christ, and saith, 'These are hard sayings, or hard providences, who can bear

them;' John vi. 60. 66. And thus unbelief thence gathereth matter for its increase.

XXXI. 1. A Christian indeed is one that can exercise all God's graces in conjunction, and in their proper places and proportion, without setting one against another, or neglecting one while he is exercising another. He can be humbled without hindering his thankfulness and joy; and he can be thankful and joyful without hindering his due humility: his knowledge doth not destroy, but quicken his zeal: his wisdom hindereth not, but furthereth his innocency: his faith is a help to his repentance, and his repentance to his faith: his love to himself doth not hinder, but help his love to others; and his love to God is the end of both. He can mourn for the sins of the times, and the calamities of the church, yea, for his own sins and imperfections, and yet rejoice for the mercies which he hath in possession or in hope. He findeth that piety and charity are necessarily conjunct; and every grace and duty is a help to all the rest. Yea, he can exercise his graces methodically, which is the comeliness and beauty of his heart and life; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 16—21. 1 Pet. ii. 17.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have every grace, and his obedience is universal, yet can he hardly set himself to any duty, but it hindereth him from some other duty, through the narrowness and weakness of his mind. When he is humbling himself in confession of sin, he can scarce be lively in thankfulness for mercy: when he rejoiceth, it hindereth his humiliation; he can hardly do one duty without omitting or hindering another: he is either all for joy or all for sorrow; all for love or all for fear; and cannot well do many things at once, but is apt to separate the truths and duties which God hath inseparably conjoined.

3. And for the seeming Christian, he exerciseth no grace in sincerity, nor is he universal in his obedience to God; though he may have the image of every grace and duty.

XXXII. 1. A Christian indeed is more in getting and using his graces, than in inquiring whether he have them: he is very desirous to be assured that he is sincere, but he is more desirous to be so: and he knoweth that even assurance is got more by the exercise and increase of grace, than by bare inquiry whether we have it already: not that he is a neglecter of self-examination, but he oftener asketh,

‘What shall I do to be saved?’ than, ‘How shall I know that I shall be saved?’

2. But the weak Christian hath more of self, and less of God in his solicitude: and though he be willing to obey the whole law of Christ, yet he is much more solicitous to know that he is out of danger, and shall be saved, than to be fully pleasing unto God; and therefore proportionably, he is more in inquiring by what marks he may know that he shall be saved, than by what means he may attain more holiness, and what diligence is necessary to his salvation.

3. But the seeming Christian is most careful how to prosper in the world, or please his flesh: and next, how he may be sure to escape damnation when he hath done; and least of all, how he may conform to Christ in holiness.

XXXIII. 1. A Christian indeed doth study duty more than events; and is more careful what he shall be towards God, than what he shall have from God in this life. He looketh to his own part more than unto God’s, as knowing that it is he that is like to fail; but God will never fail of his part: he is much more suspicious of himself than of God; and when any thing goeth amiss, he blameth himself, and not God’s providence: he knoweth that the hairs of his head are numbered, and that his Father knoweth what he needeth; and that God is infinitely wiser, and fitter to dispose of him, than he is to choose for himself, and that God loveth him better than he can love himself; and therefore he thankfully accepteth that easy, indulgent command, “Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you. Take no thought what you shall eat or drink, or wherewith you shall be clothed;” Heb. xii. 15. xiii. v. Job i. 11, 22. Matt. x. 30. vi. 25. 31, 32. 1 Pet. v. 7.

2. But alas! how guilty is the weak Christian of meddling with God’s part of the work! How sinfully careful what will become of him, and of his family, and affairs, and of the church, as if he were afraid lest God would prove forgetful, unfaithful, or insufficient for his work! So imperfect is his trust in God.

3. And the seeming Christian really trusteth him not at all, for any thing that he can trust himself or the creature for; he will have two strings to his bow if he can; but it is in man that he placeth his greatest trust for any thing that man can do. Indeed to save his soul he knoweth none but

God is to be trusted, and therefore his life is still preferred before his soul; and consequently man whom he trusteth most with his life and prosperity, is really trusted before God, however God may have the name; Jer. xvii. 5. 7. Psal. xxxiv. 8. xx. 7. xxxiv. 22. xxxvii. 3.

XXXIV. 1. A Christian indeed is much more studious of his own duty towards others, than of theirs to him; he is much more fearful of doing wrong, than of receiving wrong: he is more troubled if he say ill of others, than if others speak ill of him: he had far rather be slandered himself, than slander others; or be censured himself, than censure others; or be unjustly hurt himself, than unjustly hurt another; or to be put out of his own possessions or right, than to put another out of his; he is oftener and sharper in judging and reproofing himself than others; he falleth out with himself more frequently than with others; and is more troubled with himself than with all the world besides; he taketh himself for his greatest enemy, and knoweth that his danger is most at home; and that if he can escape but from himself, no one in earth or hell can undo him; he is more careful of his duty to his prince, his parents, his pastor, or his master, than of theirs to him; he is much more unwilling to be disobedient to them in any lawful thing, or to dishonour them, than to be oppressed, or unjustly afflicted, or abused by them. And all this is, because he knoweth that sin is worse than present suffering; and that he is not to answer for other men's sins, but for his own; nor shall he be condemned for the sins of any but himself; and that many millions are condemned for wronging others, but no one for being wronged by others; 1 Pet. iv. 12—16. Matt. v. 10—12. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 15—17.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same mind in the main; but with so much imperfection, that he is much more frequent in censuring others, and complaining of their wrongs, and finding fault with them, and aggravating all that is said or done against himself, when he is hardly made so sensible of as great miscarriages in himself, as having much more uncharitableness, partiality, and selfishness, than a confirmed Christian hath. There are few things which weakness of grace doth more ordinarily appear in, than this partiality and selfishness, in judging of the faults or duties of others, and of his own. How apt are (not only hypocrites,

but) weak Christians, to aggravate all that is done against them ; and to extenuate or justify all that they do against another. O what a noise they make of it, if they think that any one hath wronged them, defamed them, disparaged them, or encroached on their right. If God himself be blasphemed or abused, they can more patiently bear it, and make not so great a matter of it. Who heareth of such angry complaints on God's behalf, as on men's own? Of such passionate invectives, such sharp prosecutions, against those that wrong both God and men's souls, as against those that wrong a selfish person. (And usually every man seemeth to wrong him, who keepeth from him any thing which he would have, or saith any thing of him which is displeasing to him.) Go to the assizes and courts of justice ; look into the prisons, and inquire whether it be zeal for God, or for men's selves, which is the plaintiff and prosecutor? and whether it be for wronging God or them, that all the stir is made? Men are ready to say, God is sufficient to right himself. As if he were not the Original and the End of laws and government, and magistrates were not his officers, to promote obedience to him in the world.

At this time how universal is men's complaint against their governors ! how common are the cries of the poor and sufferers, of the greatness of their burdens, miseries, and wants. But how few lament the sins against government, which this land hath been sadly guilty of ! The pastors complain of the people's contempt : the people complain of the pastor's insufficiency and lives. The master complaineth how hard it is to get good servants, that will mind their business and profit as if it were their own : servants complaining of their masters for over labouring them or using them too hardly. Landlords say that their tenants cheat them : and tenants say that their landlords oppress and grind them. But if you were Christians indeed, the most common and sad complaints would be against yourselves. ' I am not so good a ruler, so peaceable a subject, so good a landlord, so good a tenant, so good a master, so good a servant, as I ought to be.' Your ruler's sin, your subject's sin, your landlord's sin, your tenant's sin, your master's sin, your servant's sin, shall not be charged upon you in judgment, nor condemn you, but your own sin. How much more, therefore, should you complain of your own, than of theirs ?

3. As for the seeming Christian, I have told you already, that selfishness is his nature and predominant constitution; and according to self-interest, he judgeth of almost all things; of the faults and duties of others and himself. And therefore no man seemeth honest or innocent to him who displeaseth him, and is against his worldly interest. Cross him about mine and thine, and he will beknave the honestest man alive, and call his ancient friend his enemy. But of his dealings with them, he is not so scrupulous, nor so censorious of himself.

XXXV. 1. A Christian indeed is much taken up in the government of his thoughts, and hath them so much ordinarily in obedience, that God and his service, and the matters of his salvation have that precedency in them, and his eye is fixed on his end and duty; and his thoughts refuse not to serve him for any work of God to which he calleth them. He suffereth them not to be the inlets or agents for pride, or lust, or envy, or voluptuousness, or to contrive iniquity: but if any such sparks from hell are cast into his thoughts, he presently laboureth to extinguish them. If they intrude, he letteth them not lodge or dwell there. And though he cannot keep out all disorder or vanity, or inordinate delights, yet is it his endeavour, and he leaveth not his heart in any thing to itself.

2. The weak Christian also maketh conscience of his thoughts, and alloweth them not to be the inlets or servants of any reigning sin. But alas, how imperfectly doth he govern them! what a deal of vanity and confusion is in them! how carelessly doth he watch them! how remissly doth he rebuke them, excite them, and command them! how oft are they defiled with impurity and uncharitableness! and how little doth he repent of this, or endeavour to reform it! And little serviceable are his thoughts, to any high and heavenly work, in comparison of the confirmed Christian.

3. And the seeming Christian is very little employed about his thoughts, but leaveth them to be the servants of his pride, and worldliness, or sensuality, or some reigning sin; Psal. x. 4. Matt. xv. 19. 1 Cor. iii. 20. Isa. lv. 7. Jer. iv. 14. vi. 19.

XXXVI. 1. A Christian indeed is much employed in the government of his passions; and hath so far mastered them, as that they prevail not to prevent his judgment, nor to dis-

compose his heart so far as to interrupt much his communion with God, nor to ensnare his heart to any creature, nor to breed any fixed uncharitableness or malice in him, nor to cause his tongue to speak things injurious to God or man, to curse, or swear, or rail, or lie; nor yet to cause him to hurt and injure any in his heart. But when passion would be inordinate, either in delights or desires, or anger, or grief, or fear, or hope, he flieth to his helps to suppress and govern them. (Though fear is more out of man's power than the rest, and therefore ordinarily hath less of sin.) He knoweth that Christ hath blessed the meek (Matt. v. 5.), and bids us learn of "him to be meek and lowly; Matt. xi. 28, 29. And that a "meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price;" 1 Pet. iii. 4. It is, therefore, his care and course to give place to wrath when others are angry; Rom. xii. 18, 19. And "if it be possible, as much as in him lieth, to live peaceably with all men," (Heb. xii. 14.); yea, to follow peace when it flieth from him; and not, when he is reviled, to revile again, nor to threaten or revenge himself on them that injure him; 1 Pet. ii. 21—24. Reason and charity hold the reins, and passion is kept under; yea, it is used holily for God; Ephes. iv. 26. Slow to anger he is in his own cause, and watchful over his anger even in God's cause; Prov. xv. 8. xvi. 32 Ephes. iv. 31. Col. iii. 8.

2. But the weak Christian doth greatly shew his weakness in his unruly passions, (if he have a temper of body disposed to passion): they are oft rising, and not easily kept under; yea, and too often prevail for such unseemly words, as maketh him become a dishonour to his profession. Oft he resolveth, and promiseth, and prayeth for help, and yet the next provocation sheweth how little grace he hath to hold the reins. And his passionate desires, and delights, and love, and sorrows, are oft as unruly as his anger, to the further weakening of his soul. They are like ague fits, that leave the health impaired.

3. And the seeming Christian hath much less power over those passions, which must subserve his carnal mind. For anger it dependeth much upon the temperature of the body; and if that incline him not strongly to it, his credit, or common discretion may suppress it: unless you touch his chiefest carnal interest, and then he will not only be angry, but cruel, malicious, and revengeful. But his carnal

love, and desire, and delight, which are placed upon that pleasure, or profit, or honour; which is his idol, are indeed the reigning passions in him. And his grief, and fear, and anger, are but the servants unto these; Acts xxiv. 26, 27.

XXXVII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that keepeth a constant government of his tongue; he knoweth how much duty or sin it will be the instrument of. According to his ability and opportunity he useth it to the service and honour of his Creator. In speaking of his excellencies, his works, and word; inquiring after the knowledge of him and his will; instructing others, and pleading for the truth and ways of God, and rebuking the impiety and iniquities of the world, as his place and calling doth allow him. He bridleth his tongue from uttering vanity, filthiness, ribaldry, and foolish and uncomely talk and jests; from rash and irreverent talk of God, and taking of his name in vain; from the venting of undigested and uncertain doctrines which may prove erroneous and perilous to men's souls; from speaking imprudently, unhandsomely, or unseasonably about holy things, so as to expose them to contempt and scorn; from lying, censuring others without a warrantable ground and call; from backbiting, slandering, false-accusing, railing and reviling; malicious, envious, injurious speech, which tendeth to extinguish the love of the hearers to those he speaketh of; from proud and boasting speeches of himself, much more from swearing, cursing, and blasphemous speech, and opposition to the truths and holy ways of God, or opprobrious speeches, or derision of his servants. And in the government of his tongue, he always beginneth with his heart, that he may understand and love the good which he speaketh of, and may hate the evil which his tongue forbearcth; and not hypocritically to force his tongue against or without his heart. His tongue doth not run before his heart, but is ruled by it; Ephes. iv. 15. 29. 31. v. 3, 4, 6. Psal. xxxvii. 30. xv. 2, 3. Prov. xvi. 13. x. 20. xxi. 23. xviii. 21. xv. 2. 4. Psal. 34. 13. Prov. xxv. 15. 23. xxviii. 23. Matt. xii. 31, 32. 34.

2. But the weak Christian, though his tongue be sincerely subject to the laws of God, yet frequently miscarrieth and blemisheth his soul by the words of his lips, being much oftner than the confirmed Christian overtaken with words of vanity, meddling, folly, imprudence, uncharitableness, wrath,

boasting, venting uncertain or erroneous opinions, &c. so that the unruliness of his tongue is the trouble of his heart, if not also of the family, and all about him.

3. The seeming Christian useth his tongue in the service of his carnal ends, and therefore alloweth it so much unjustice, uncharitableness, falsehood, and other sins, as his carnal interest and designs require; but the rest perhaps he may suppress, especially if natural sobriety, good education and prudence do assist him; and his tongue is always better than his heart; Prov. x. 32. xix. 5. 9. Psal. l. 20. xii. 3. cxliv. 8. cxx. 2, 3. Prov. xxi. 6. 23.

XXXVIII. 1. The religious discourse of a confirmed Christian is most about the greatest and most necessary matters: heart-work and heaven-work are the usual employment of his tongue and thoughts; unprofitable controversies, and hurtful wranglings he abhorreth; and profitable controversies he manageth sparingly, seasonably, charitably, peaceably, and with caution and sobriety, as knowing that the servant of the Lord must not strive, and that strife of words perverteth the hearers, and hindereth edifying; 1 Tim. vi. 4—6. iv. 7, 8. 2 Tim. ii. 14—17. 24, 25. His ordinary discourse is about the glorious excellencies, attributes, relations, and works of God; and the mystery of redemption, the person, office, covenant, and grace of Christ; the renewing, illuminating, sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost; the mercies of this life, and that to come; the duty of man to God as his Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator; the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart; the methods of the tempter; the danger of particular temptations; and the means of our escape, and of our growth in grace; and how to be profitable to others, and especially to the church. And if he be called to open any truth which others understand not, he doth it not proudly, to set up himself as master of a sect, or to draw disciples after him, nor make divisions about it in the church; but soberly, to the edification of the weak. And though he be ready to defend the truth against perverse gainsayers in due season, yet doth he not turn his ordinary edifying discourse into disputes, or talk of controversies; nor hath such a proud, pugnacious soul, as to assault every one that he thinks erroneous, as a man that taketh himself for the great champion of the truth.

2. But the weak Christian hath a more unfruitful, wandering tongue, and his religious discourse is most about his opinions or party, or some external thing; as which is the best preacher, or person, or book. Or if he talk of any text of Scripture, or doctrine of religion, it is much of the outside of it; and his discourse is less feeling, lively, and experimental. Yea, many a time he hindereth the more edifying, savoury discourse of others, by such religious discourse as is imprudent, impertinent, or turneth them away from the heart and life of the matter in hand. But especially his opinions, and distinct manner of worship, are the chief of his discourse.

3. And for the seeming Christian, though he can affectedly force his tongue to talk of any subject in religion, especially that which he thinks will most honour him in the esteem of the hearers; yet when he speaketh according to the inclination of his heart, his discourse is first about his fleshly interest and concerns, and next to that of the mere externals of religion, as controversies, parties, and the several modes of worship.

XXXIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that so liveth upon the great substantial matters of religion, as yet not willingly to commit the smallest sin, nor to own the smallest falsehood, nor to renounce or betray the smallest holy truth or duty, for any price that man can offer him. The works of repentance, faith, and love, are his daily business, which take up his greatest care and diligence. Whatever opinions or controversies are afoot, his work is still the same; whatever changes come, his religion changeth not; he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and drinks, and circumstances and ceremonies, either being for them or against them, but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And he that in these things serveth Christ, as he is acceptable to God, so is he approved by such a Christian as this, however factious persons may revile him; Rom. xiv. 17, 18. 1—5. 10. The strong Christian can "bear the infirmities of the weak," and not take the course that most pleaseth himself, but that which "pleaseth his neighbour for his good to edification;" Rom. xv. 1—3. The essentials of religion, faith, and love, and obedience, are as bread and drink, the substance of his food. These he meditateth

on, and these he practiseth, and according to these he esteemeth of others.

But yet no price can seem sufficient to him, to buy his innocency; nor will he wilfully sin, and say, it is a little one, nor “do evil that good may come by it;” nor offer to God the sacrifice of disobedient fools, and then say, ‘I knew not that I did evil;’ for he knoweth that God will rather have obedience than sacrifice, and that “disobedience is as the sin of witchcraft;” and “he that breaketh one of the least commands, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of God.” And he that teacheth men to sin by the example of his own practice, can little expect to turn them from sin, by his better instructions and exhortations. He that will deliberately sin in a small matter, doth set but a small price on the favour of God and his salvation. Wilful disobedience is odious to God, how small soever the matter be about which it is committed. Who can expect that he should stick at any sin, when his temptation is great, who will considerably commit the least; especially if he will approve and justify it? Therefore the sound Christian will rather forsake his riches, his liberty, his reputation, his friends, and his country, than his conscience; and rather lay down liberty, and life itself, than choose to sin against his God, as knowing that never man gained by his sin; Rom. iii. 8. Eccles. v. 2. 1 Sam. xv. 15. 21—23. Matt. v. 19. The sin that Saul was rejected for seemed but a little thing; nor the sin that Uzzah was slain for; and the service of God, even his sacrifice and his ark, were the pretence for both. The sin of the Bethshemites, of Achan, of Gehazi, of Ananias and Sapphira, which had grievous punishments, would seem but little things to us. And it is a great aggravation of our sin to be chosen, deliberate, justified, and fathered upon God; and to pretend that we do it for his service, for the worshipping of him, or the doing good to others, as if God would own and bless sinful means, or needed a lie to his service or glory: when he hateth all the workers of iniquity (Psal. v. 5.), and requireth only the sacrifices of righteousness; Psal. iv. 5. He abhorreth sacrifice from polluted hands; they are to him as the offering a dog; and he will ask who hath required this at your hand. See Psal. l. 8—14. Isa. i. 9—12, &c. lviii. 1—4, &c. Jer. vi. 19, 20. “The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord;”

Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. It is not pleasing to him; "all that eat thereof shall be polluted;" Hosea ix. 4. See Isa lxvi. 1—6. The preaching, the praying, the sacraments of wilful sinners, especially when they choose sin as necessary to his service, are a scorn and mockery put upon the most Holy One: as if your servant should set dung and carrion before you on your table for your food; such offer Christ vinegar and gall to drink.

2. In all this the weakest Christian that is sincere, is of the same mind, saving that in his ordinary course, he useth to place too much of his religion in controversies, and parties, and modes, and ceremonies, (whether being for them or against them,) and allow too great a proportion in his thoughts, and speech, and zeal, and practice; and hindereth the growth of his grace, by living upon less edifying things, and turning too much from the more substantial nutriment.

3. And the seeming Christians are here of different ways. One sort of them place almost all their religion in Pharisaical observation of little, external, ceremonial matters; as their washings, and fastings, and tithings, and formalities, and the tradition of the elders; or in their several opinions, and ways, and parties, which they call, 'being of the true church;' as if their sect were all the church. But living to God in faith and love, and in a heavenly conversation, and worshipping him in spirit and truth, they are utterly unacquainted with. The other sort are truly void of these essential parts of Christianity, in the life and power, as well as the former. But yet being secretly resolved to take up no more of Christianity than will consist with their worldly prosperity and ends, when any sin seemeth necessary to their preferment or safety in the world, their way is to pretend their high esteem of greater matters, for the swallowing of such a sin as an inconsiderable thing. And then they extol those larger souls that live not upon circumstantial, but upon the great and common truths and duties, and pity those men of narrow principles and spirits, who by unnecessary scrupulosity make sin of that which is no sin, and expose themselves to needless trouble. And they would make themselves and others believe that it is their excellency and wisdom, to be above such trifling scruples. And all is because they never took God and heaven for their all, and therefore are resolved never to lose all for the hopes of hea-

ven ; and therefore to do that, whatever it be, which their worldly interest shall require, and not to be of any religion that will undo them.

And three great pretences are effectual means in this their deceit. One is, because indeed there are a sort of persons that tithe mint and cummin, while they pass by the greatest matters of the law, and that are causelessly scrupulous, and make that to be sin which indeed is no sin : and when such a scrupulous people are noted by their weakness, and under dishonour among wiser men, the hypocrite hath a very plausible pretence for his hypocrisy, in seeming only to avoid this ignorant scrupulosity, and taking all for such who judge not his sin to be a thing indifferent.

Another great shelter to the credit and conscience of this hypocrite, is the charity of the best, sincerest Christians, who always judge rigidly of themselves, and gently of others. They would rather die than wilfully choose to commit the smallest sin themselves ; but if they see another commit it, they judge as favourably of it as the case will bear, and hope that he did it not knowingly or wilfully ; for they are bound to hope the best till the worst be evident. This being the upright Christian's case, the hypocrite knoweth that he shall still have a place in the esteem and love of those charitable Christians ; (whose integrity and moderation, maketh their judgments most valuable :) and then for the judgment of God, he will venture on it ; and for the censures of weaker persons, who themselves are censured by the best for their censoriousness, he can easily bear them.

And another covert for the hypocrite in this case, is the different judgments of learned and religious men, who make a controversy of the matter. And what duty or sin is there that is not become a controversy ? Yea, and among men otherwise well esteemed of, (except in the essentials of religion). And if once it be a controversy, whether it be a sin or not, the hypocrite can say, ' I am of the judgment of such and such good and learned men ; they are very judicious, excellent persons ; and we must not judge one another in controverted cases ; though we differ in judgment, we must not differ in affection.' And thus because he hath a shelter for his reputation from the censures of men, by the countenance of such as accompany him in his sin, he is as quiet as if he were secured from the censures of the Almighty.

XL. 1. A Christian indeed is one that highly valueth time ; he abhorreth idleness, and all diversions which would rob him of his time, and hinder him from his work. He knoweth how much work he hath to do, and of what unspeakable consequence to his soul, (if not also to others). He knoweth that he hath a soul to save or lose ; a heaven to win ; a hell to escape ; a death and judgment to prepare for ; many a sin to mortify, and many graces to get, and exercise, and increase ; and many enemies and temptations to overcome ; and that he shall never have more time of trial ; but what is now undone, must be undone for ever. He knoweth how short, and hasty time is, and also how uncertain ; and how short many hundred years is to prepare for an everlasting state, if all were spent in greatest diligence : and therefore he wondereth at those miserable souls, that have time to spare, and waste in those fooleries which they call pastimes, even in stage-plays, cards, and dice, and long and tedious feastings, delights, compliments, idleness, and overlong or needless visits or recreations. He marvelleth at the distraction or sottishness of those persons, that can play, and prate, and loiter, and feast away precious hours, as if their poor, unprepared souls had nothing to do, while they stand at the very brink of a dreadful eternity ; and are so fearfully unready as they are. He taketh that person who would cheat him of his time, by any of these forenamed baits, to be worse to him than a thief that would take his purse from him by the highway. O precious time ! how highly doth he value it, when he thinks of his everlasting state, and thinks what haste his death is making, and what reckoning he must make for every moment ; what abundance of work hath he for every hour, which he is grieved that he cannot do ! He hath a calling to follow, and he hath a heart to search, and watch, and study ; and a God to seek and faithfully serve ; and many to do good to ; and abundance of particular duties to perform in order to every one of these. But, alas ! time doth make such haste away, that many things are left undone, and he is afraid lest death will find him very much behindhand : and therefore he is up and doing, as one that hath use for every minute ; and worketh while it is day, because he knoweth that the night is coming when none can work ; John ix. 4. Redeeming time is much of his wisdom and his work ; Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

He had rather labour in the house of correction, than live the swinish life of idle and voluptuous gentlemen, or beggars, that live to no higher end, than to live, or to please their flesh ; or to live as worldlings, that lose all their lives in the service of a perishing world. He knoweth how precious time will be ere long, in the eyes of those that now make light of it, and trifle it away as a contemned thing, as if they had too much.

2. The weak Christian is of the same mind in the main : But when it cometh to particular practice, he is like a weak or weary traveller, that goeth but slowly, and maketh many a stop. Though his face is still heavenwards, he goeth but a little way in a day : he is too easily tempted to idle, or talk, or feast, or play away an hour unlawfully, so it be not his ordinary course, and he do it but seldom. He taketh not the loss of an hour for so great a loss as the confirmed Christian doth : he could sooner be persuaded to live (though not an idle and unprofitable, yet) an easier, less profitable life. The world and the flesh have far more of his hours, than they ought to have ; though his weakness tell him that he hath most need of diligence.

3. But the time of a seeming Christian is most at the service of his fleshly interest ; and for that it is principally employed. And for that he can redeem it, and grudge if it be lost. But as he liveth not to God, so he cannot redeem his time for God. He loseth it even when he seemeth to employ it best ; when he is praying, or otherwise worshipping God, and doing that good which feedeth his false hopes, he is not redeeming his time in all this. While he is sleeping in security, and deluding his soul with a few formal words, and an image of religion, and his time passeth on, and he is hurried away to the dreadful day, and his damnation slumbereth not ; 2 Pet. ii. 3. Prov. xx. 4. Matt. xxv. 6—8.

XLI. 1. A Christian indeed is one whose very heart is set upon doing good : as one that is made to be profitable to others, according to his ability and place ; even as the sun is made to shine upon the world ; he could not be content to live idly, or to labour unprofitably, or to get never so much to himself, unless he some way contributed to the good of others. Not that he grudgeth at the smallness of his talents, and lowness or obscurity of his place, for he knoweth that God may dispose his creatures and talents as

he please ; and that where much is given, much is required : Matt. xxv. Luke xii. 48. xix. 23. But what his Lord hath trusted him with, he is loath to hide, and willing to improve to his Master's use. He is so far from thinking that God is beholden to him for his good works, that he taketh it for one of his greatest mercies in the world, that God will use him in doing any good ; and he would take it for a very great suffering to be deprived of such opportunities, or turned out of service, or called to less of that kind of duty. If he were a physician, and denied liberty to practise, or a minister, and denied liberty to preach, it would far more trouble him that he is hindered from doing good, than that he is deprived of any profits, or honours to himself. He doth not only comfort himself with foresight of the reward, but in the very doing of good he findeth so much pleasure, as maketh him think it the most delightful life in the world : and he looketh for most of his receivings from God, in a way of duty ; John v. 29. Gal. vi. 10. Heb. xiii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 11.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have the same disposition, is far less profitable to the world : he is more for himself, and less able to do good to others : he wanteth either parts, or prudence, or zeal, or strength. Yea, he is oft like the infants, and sick persons of a family, that are not helpful, but troublesome to the rest. They find work for the stronger Christians to bear their infirmities, and watch them, and support and help them. Indeed, as an infant is a comfort to the mother, through the power of her own love, even when she endureth the trouble of its crying and uncleanness ; so weak Christians are a comfort to charitable ministers and people ; we are glad that they are alive ; but sadded often by their distempers ; Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 12.

3. The seeming Christian liveth to himself, and all his good works are done but for himself, to keep up his credit, or quiet his guilty conscience, and deceive himself with the false hopes of a reward, for that which his falsehoodness maketh to be his sin. If he be a man of learning and good parts, he may be very serviceable to the church ; but the thanks of that is due to God, and little to him, who seeketh himself more than God, or the good of others, in all that he doth ; Matt. xxv. 24—26.

XLII. 1. A Christian indeed, doth truly love his neighbour as himself : he is not all for his own commodity : his

neighbour's profit or good name, is as his own : he feeleth himself hurt when his neighbour is hurt : and if his neighbour prosper, he rejoiceth as if he prospered himself. Though his neighbour be not united to him, in the nearest bonds of Christianity or piety, yet he is not disregardful of the common unity of humanity. Love is the very soul of life ; Lev. xix. 18. Matt. xix. 19. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 9 Gal. v. 14. James ii. 8. Mark x. 21. 1 John iv. 10.

2. But the love that is in weaker Christians, though it be sincere, is weak as they are ; and mixed with too much selfishness, and with too much sourness and wrath. Little matters cause differences and fallings out. When it cometh to MINE and THINE, and their neighbours cross their interest or commodity, or stand in their way when they are seeking any preferment or profit to themselves ; you shall see too easily by their sourness and contention, how weak their love is ; Matt. xxiv. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 10. Luke xxii. 24.

3. But in the seeming Christian, selfishness is so predominant, that he loveth none but for himself, with any considerable love. All his kindness is from self-love, because men love him, or highly value him, or praise him, or have done him some good turn, or may do him good hereafter, or the like. If he hath any love to any for his own worth, yet self-love can turn all that to hatred, if they seem against him, or cross him in his way : for no man that is a lover of the world and flesh, and carnal self, can ever be a true friend to any other. For he loveth them but for his own ends ; and any cross interests will shew the falsehood of his love ; 2 Tim. iii. 2—4. Matt. v. 46.

XLIII. 1. A Christian indeed hath a special love to all the godly ; such as endeareth his heart unto them ; and such as will enable him to visit them, and relieve them in their wants, to his own loss and hazard, according to his ability and opportunity. For the image of God is beautiful and honourable in his eyes : he loveth not them so much as God in them ; Christ in them ; the Holy Spirit in them. He foreseeth the day when he shall meet them in heaven, and there rejoice in God with them to eternity. He loveth their company and converse ; and delighteth in their gracious words and lives. And the converse of ungodly and empty men is a weariness to him (unless in a way of duty, or when he can do them good). “ In his eyes a vile person is con-

tenned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord ;” Psal. xv. 4. Other men grieve his soul with their iniquities, while he is delighted with the appearances of God in his holy ones, even the excellent ones on earth ; Psal. xvi. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Yea, the infirmities of believers destroy not his love ; for he hath learned of God himself to difference between their abhorred frailties and their predominant grace ; and to love the very infants in the family of Christ. Yea, though they wrong him, or quarrel with him, or censure him in their weakness, he can honour their sincerity, and love them still. And if some of them prove scandalous, and some seeming Christians fall away, or fall into the most odious crimes, he loveth religion nevertheless ; but continueth as high an esteem of piety, and of all that are upright, as he had before ; 1 John iv. 7, 8. 10. 2 John xiii. 34, 35. 1 Thess. iv. 9. 1 John iii. 11. 14. 23. Matt. xxv. 39, 40, &c.

2. The weak Christian sincerely loveth all that bear his father’s image ; but it is with a love so weak (even when it is most passionate) as will sooner be abated or interrupted by any tempting differences. He is usually quarrelsome and froward with his brethren, and apter to confine his love to those that are of his own opinion or party. And because God hath taught him to love all that are sincere, the devil tempteth him to censure them as not sincere, that so he may justify himself in the abatement of his love. And weak Christians are usually the most censorious, because they have the smallest degree of love, which covereth faults, and thinketh no evil, and is not suspicious, but ever apt to judge the best, till the worst be evident ; 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. “ It beareth all things, believeth all things (that are credible), hopeth all things, endureth all things ;” ver. 7. But it is no wonder to see children fall out, even about their childish toys and trifles ; and what the dissensions of the children of the church have done against themselves in these kingdoms, I need not, I delight not, to record. See 1 Cor. iii. 1—4. “ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat ; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able : for ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you, envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men ?”

3. The seeming Christian may have some love to real

Christians, even for their goodness' sake ; but it is a love subservient to his carnal self-love ; and, therefore, it shall not cost him much. As he hath some love to Christ, so he may have some love to Christians ; but he hath more to the world and fleshly pleasures ; and, therefore, all his love to Christ or Christians, will not make him leave his worldly happiness for them. And, therefore, Christ, at the day of judgment, will not inquire after empty, barren love, but after that love which visited and relieved suffering saints. A hypocrite can allow both Christ and Christians such a cheap, superficial kind of love, as will cost him little. He will bid them lovingly, " Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled ;" James ii. 15—17. But still the world is most beloved.

XLIV. 1. A Christian indeed doth love his enemies, and forgive those that injure him, and this out of a thankful sense of that grace which forgave him a far greater debt. Not that he thinketh it unlawful to make use of the justice of the government which he is under, for his necessary protection, or for the restraint of men's abuse and violence. Nor is he bound to love the malice or injury, though he must love the man. Nor can he forgive a crime as it is against God or the common good, or against another, though he can forgive an injury or debt that is his own. Nor is he bound to forgive every debt, though he is bound so far to forgive every wrong as heartily to desire the good of him that did it. Even God's enemies he so far loveth, as to desire God to convert and pardon them, while he hateth their sin, and hateth them as God's enemies, and desireth their restraint ; Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22. ci. 3. cxix. 4. lxxviii. 1. xxi. 8. But those that hate, and curse, and persecute himself, he can unfeignedly love, and bless, and pray for ; Matt. v. 43—48. For he knoweth that else he cannot be a child of God ; ver. 45. And that to love those that love him is not much praiseworthy, being no more than heathens and wicked men can do ; ver. 46, 47. He is so deeply sensible of that wondrous love which so dearly redeemed him, and saved him from hell, and forgave him a thousandfold worse than the worst that ever was done against himself, that thankfulness and imitation, or conformity to Christ in his great compassions, do overcome his desires of revenge, and make him willing to do good to his most cruel enemies, and

pray for them as Christ and Stephen did at their deaths ; Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60. And he knoweth that he is so inconsiderable a worm, that a wrong done to him as such, is the less considerable ; and he knoweth that he daily wrongeth God, more than any man can wrong him, and that he can hope for pardon, but on condition that he himself forgive ; Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15. xviii. 34, 35. And that he is far more hurtful to himself, than any other can be to him.

2. And the weak Christian can truly love an enemy, and forgive a wrong ; but he doth it not so easily and so fully as the other. But it is with much striving, and some unwillingness and averseness ; and there remaineth some grudge or strangeness upon the mind. He doth not sufficiently forget the wrong which he doth forgive. Indeed, his forgiving is very imperfect, like himself (Matt. xviii. 21. Luke ix. 54, 55.), not with that freeness and readiness required. “ With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ;” Eph. iv. 2. “ Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another ; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye ;” Col. iii. 13, 18. “ Avenge not yourselves,” &c. Rom. xii. 14, 18.

3. As for the seeming Christian, he can seem to forgive wrongs for the sake of Christ, but if he do it indeed it is for his own sake. As because it is for his honour, or because the person hath humbled himself to him, or his commodity requireth it, or he can make use of his love and service for his advantage, or some one hath interposed for reconciliation who must not be denied, or the like. But to love an enemy indeed, and to love that man (be he never so good) who standeth in the way of his preferment, honour or commodity in the world, he never doth it from his heart, whatever he may seem to do ; Matt. vi. 14, 15. xviii. 27, 30, 32. The love of Christ doth not constrain him.

XLV. 1. A Christian indeed is as precise in the justice of his dealings with men, as in acts of piety to God. For he knoweth that God requireth this as strictly at his hands. “ That no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter ; for the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified ;” 1 Thess. iv. 6. He is one that

“walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. If he swear to his own hurt, he changeth not. He putteth not out his money to (unjust or unmerciful) usury; nor taketh reward against the innocent;” Psal. xv. He obeyeth that, Lev. xix. 13. “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.” He can say as Samuel, “Whose ox or ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it? And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken out of any man’s hand;” 1 Sam. xii. And if heretofore he was ever guilty of defrauding any he is willing to his power to make restitution; and saith as Zaccheus, “If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold;” Luke xix. 8. Though flesh and blood persuade him to the contrary, and though it leave him in want, he will pay his debts, and make restitution of that which is ill gotten, as being none of his own. He will not sell for as much as he can get, but for as much as it is truly worth: he will not take advantage of the weakness, or ignorance, or necessity of his neighbour: he knoweth that “a false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight;” Prov. xi. 1. He is afraid of believing ill reports, and rebuketh the backbiter; chap. xxv. 23. He is apt to take part with any man behind his back, who is not notoriously inexcusable; not to justify any evil, but to shew his charity, and his hatred of evil speaking, especially where it can do no good. He will not believe evil of another till the evidence do compel him to believe it. If he have wronged any by incautious words, he readily confesseth his fault to him, and asketh him forgiveness, and is ready to make any just satisfaction for any wrong that he hath done him. He borroweth not when he seeth not a great probability that he is likely to pay it. Nor will remain in debt by retaining that which is another man’s against his will, without an absolute necessity. “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another;” Rom. xiii. 8. For

to borrow when he cannot pay is but to steal. Begging is better than borrowing for such. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not;" Psal. xxxvii. 21.

2. And the weak Christian maketh conscience of justice as well as acts of piety, as knowing that God hath no need of our sacrifices, but loveth to see us do that which is good for human society, and which we have need of from each other. But yet he hath more selfishness and partiality than the confirmed Christian hath, and therefore is often overcome by temptations to unrighteous things. As to stretch his conscience for his commodity, in buying or selling, and concealing the faults of what he selleth, and sometimes overreaching others. Especially he is ordinarily too censorious of others, and apt to be credulous of evil reports, and to be over bold and forward of speaking ill of men behind their backs, and without a call; especially against persons that differ from him in matters of religion, where he is usually most unjust and apt to go beyond his bounds; James iii. 15, 16. Tit. iii. 2. Eph. iv. 31. 1 Pet. ii. 1.

3. The seeming Christian may have a seeming justice; but really he hath none but what must give place to his fleshly interest; and if his honour, and commodity and safety require it, he will not stick to be unjust. And that justice which wanteth but a strong temptation to overturn it, is almost as bad as none. If he will not seize on Naboth's vineyard, nor make himself odious by oppression or deceit, yet if he can raise or enrich himself by secret cozenage, and get so fair a pretence for his injustice, as shall cloak the matter from the sight of men, he seldom sticketh at it. It is an easy matter to make an Achan think that he doth no harm, or a Gehazi that he wrongeth no man, in taking that which was offered and due. Covetousness will not confess its name; but will find some reasonings to make good all the injustice which it doth; 1 Tim. vi. 5. 2 Kings v. 19, 20.

XLVI. 1. A Christian indeed is faithful and laborious in his particular calling, and that not out of a covetous mind; but in obedience to God, and that he may maintain his family, and be able to do good to others. For God hath said, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread;" Gen. iii. 19. "And six days shalt thou labour;" Exod. xx. 10. And with quietness men must work, and eat their own bread;

and “if any will not work, neither should he eat;” 2 Thess. iii. 10—12. Abraham, and Noah, and Adam, laboured in a constant course of employment. He knoweth that a sanctified calling and labour is a help, and not a hindrance to devotion; and that the body must have work as well as the soul, and religion must not be pretended for slothful idleness, nor against obedience to our Master’s will; Prov. xxxi.

2. The weak Christian is here more easily deceived, and made believe that religion will excuse a man from bodily labour; and under the colour of devotion to live idly. “They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but tatlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not;” 2 Thess. iii. 8. 1 Tim. v. 13. Slothfulness is a sin much condemned in the Scriptures; Ezek. xvi. 49. Prov. xxiv. 30. xviii. 9. xxi. 25. Matt. xxv. 26. Rom. xii. 11.

3. The seeming Christian in his labour is ruled chiefly by his flesh. If he be rich, and it incline him most to sloth, he maketh small conscience of living in idleness, under the pretence of his gentility or wealth. But if the flesh incline him more to covetousness, he will be laborious enough: but it shall not be to please God by obedience, but to increase his estate, and enrich himself and his posterity, whatever better reason he pretend.

XLVII. 1. A Christian indeed is exactly conscionable in the duties of his relation to others in the family and place of his abode. If he be a husband, he is loving and patient, and faithful to his wife; if he be a father, he is careful of the holy education of his children; if he be a master, he is just and merciful to his servants, and careful for the saving of their souls; if he be a child or servant, he is obedient, trusty, diligent, and careful, as well behind his parent’s or his master’s back, as before his face. He dare not lie, nor steal, nor deceive, nor neglect his duty, nor speak dishonourably of his superiors, though he were sure he could conceal it all. For he knoweth that the fifth commandment is enforced with a special promise; Eph. vi. 2. 5. 9. And that a bad child, or a bad servant, a bad husband or wife, a bad parent or master, cannot be a good Christian; Col. iii. 18, 19, &c. iv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 18.

2. But weak Christians, though sincere, are ordinarily weak in this part of their duty; and apt to yield to tempta-

tions, and carry themselves proudly, stubbornly, idly, disobediently, as eye-servants that are good in sight; or to be unmerciful to inferiors, and neglecters of their souls. And to excuse all this from the faults of those that they have to do with, and lay all upon others; as if the fault of husband, wife, parent, master, or servant, would justify them in theirs; and passion and partiality would serve for innocency.

3. And the hypocrite ordinarily sheweth his hypocrisies by being false in his relations to man, while he pretendeth to be pious and obedient unto God. He is a bad master, and a bad servant, when his filthy interest requireth it, and yet thinketh himself a good Christian for all that. For all men being faulty, it is easy to find a pretence from all men that he doth abuse, to cover the injury of his abuse. Cain, Ham, Eli, Absalom, Judas, &c. are sad examples of this.

XLVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is the best subject, whether his prince be good or bad. Though by infidel and ungodly rulers he be oft mistaken for the worst. He obeyeth not his rulers only for his own ends, but in obedience to God; and not only for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake. He looketh on them in their relations as the officers of God, and armed with his authority, and therefore obeyeth God in them. He permitteth not dishonourable thoughts of them in his heart; much less dare he speak dishonourably of them; Exod. xii. Prov. xxiv. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 17. Prov. viii. 15. Acts xxiii. 4, 5. Eccies. x. 4. 20. He knoweth that every soul must be subject to the higher powers, and not resist; and that there is no power but of God. "Who-soever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and he that resisteth shall receive to himself damnation;" Rom. xiii. 1—6. Therefore in all things lawful he obeyeth them. And though he must not, nor will not obey them against God, yet will he suffer patiently when he is wronged by them; and not only forbear resistance by arms or violence, but also all reproachful words, as knowing that the righting of himself is not so necessary to the public order and good, as the honour of his rulers is. Usurpers may probably charge him to be a traitor, and seditious and rebellious, because he dare not approve of their usurpations; and when several are contending for the government, and in a litigious title the lawyers mislead him, when the controversy is only among them, and belongs to their profes-

sion, it is possible he may mistake as well as the lawyers, and take him to have the better title that hath the worse. But in divinity he knoweth there is no controversy whether every soul must be subject to the highest power, so far as he can know it. And that prayer and patience are the subject's arms; and religion is so far from being a warrant to resist, that it plainly forbiddeth disobedience and resistance; and none are more obliged to submission and quietness than Christians are. The spirit of Christianity is not of this world; their kingdom and their hopes are not of this world; and, therefore, they contend not for dignities and rule; much less by resisting or rebelling against their lawful governors. But they are resolved to obey God, and secure their everlasting portion, and bear all the injuries which they meet with in the way, especially from those whom God hath set over them. There is no doctrine that ever was received in the world, so far from befriending seditions and rebellion, as the doctrine of Christ; nor any people in the world so loyal as Christians, while Christianity retained its genuine simplicity; till proud, domineering, worldly men, for carnal ends, pretended themselves to be Christians, and perverted the doctrine of Christ, to make it warp to their ambitious ends. Suffering seemeth not so great a matter to a holy, mortified, heavenly mind, as to tempt him to hazard his salvation to resist it. No man is so likely to be true to kings, as he that believeth that his salvation lieth on it, by the ordinance of God; Rom. xiii. 3. And princes that are wise and just, do always discern that the best Christians are their best subjects; though those that are unbelieving and ungodly themselves, have ever hated them as the greatest troubles of the earth. And it hath ever been the practice of the enemies of Christ and godliness, to do all they can to engage the rulers of the earth against them; and to persuade them that the most godly Christians are persons of disloyal and unquiet minds; and by vexing and persecuting them, they do their worst to make them such as they falsely called them. Even Christ himself was crucified as an enemy to Cæsar, and Pilate driven to it by the noise of them that cried out, that if he let them go he was not Cæsar's friend; John xix. 12. They first tempted him with the question, "Whether it were lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar;" Matt. xxii. 17. Luke xx. 22. And

though they could this way take no hold of him, yet this was the first article of his accusation : “ We have found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar :” Luke xxiii. 2. And how loyal would those rebellious Jews seem, when they thought it the only way to engage the Roman power against Christ ? Then they cry out, “ We have no king but Cæsar ;” John xix. 15. And this was the common accusation against the Christians both by Jews and Gentiles. The language of the Jews you may hear from Tertullus : “ We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes ;” Acts xxiv. 5. And at Thessalonica, the charge against them was, that they “ turned the world upside down, and did all contrary to the decrees of Cæsar ;” chap. xvii. 6, 7. And thus the best Christians have by such been slandered from age to age ; because the devil and his instruments know not how sufficiently to molest them, except they engage the rulers against them. But yet all this doth not conquer the patience and loyalty of confirmed Christians. They are wiser than that wise man that Solomon saith, “ Oppression maketh mad ;” Eccles. vii. 7. If usurpers or malicious liars shall a thousand times call them rebellious and seditious, it shall not drive them from their due subjection. They can patiently follow their Lord and the ancient Christians, in the enduring of such slanders, and suffering as enemies to Cæsar, so they do but escape the sin, and be not such as malice calleth them. They had rather die as reputed enemies to government, than to be such indeed. They prefer subjection before the reputation of it ; for they look not for their reward from princes, but from God. If they can preserve their innocence, they can bear the defamation of their names, being satisfied in the hopes of the joyful day of the judgment of Christ, which will fully justify them and set all straight. Indeed they know that a state of subjection is easier and safer than places of command ; and that it is easier to obey than govern. And so far are they from envying men’s greatness, and from desiring dominions, that they pity the tempted, and dangerous, and troublesome state of those in power, and are thankful to God for their quieter and safer station. They heartily pray for kings and all that are in authority ; not that by their favour they may rise to

places of wealth and honour, but “that under them they may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty ;” 1 Tim. ii. 2. Yea, though infidel princes hate and persecute them, they continue to pray for them, and to honour their authority, and will not thereby be driven from their duty. If God cast their lot under infidel, ungodly, and malicious governors, they do not run to arms to save themselves, or save the Gospel ; as if God had called them to reform the world, or keep it from the oppression of the higher powers. Nor do they think it a strange, intolerable matter for the best men to be lowest, and to be the suffering side, and so fall to fighting that Christ and the saints may have the rule. For they know that Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, (John xviii. 36.) ; that is, not a visible monarchy, as his usurping vicar doth pretend ; and that Christ doth most eminently rule unseen, and disposeth of all the kingdoms of the world, even where he is hated and resisted ; and that the reign of saints is in their state of glory ; and that all God’s graces do fit them more for a suffering life, than for worldly power. Their humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, contempt of the world, and heavenly mindedness, are better exercised and promoted in a suffering, than a prosperous, reigning state. When they think of the holy blood which hath been shed by heathen Rome, from Christ and Stephen, till the days of Constantine ; and the far greater streams which have been shed by the bloody papal Rome ; wherever they had power, in Piedmont, Germany, Poland, Hungary, in Belgia, England, and in other lands ; the thirty or forty thousand murdered in a few days at the Bartholomew massacre in France ; the two hundred thousand murdered in a few weeks in Ireland, they are not so unlike their suffering brethren, as to think that striving for honours and command, is their way to heaven. When Christ hath foretold them that self-denial under the cross, tribulation, and persecution, is the common way ; Luke xiv. 26, 27. 29. 33. Acts xiv. 22. John xvi. 33. Rom. v. 3. viii. 35. 2 Tim. iii. 12. Matt. v. 10—12. 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7. 10. Mark x. 30. So far are they from fighting against the injuries and cruelties of their governors, that they account the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all their treasures, (Heb. xi. 15, 26.), and think they are blessed when they are persecuted (Matt. v. 10.), and say with Paul, “ God for-

bid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world;" Gal.vi. 14. And 2 Cor. xii. 19. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong." "Nay, in all these things, when persecuted and killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter, they are more than conquerors through Christ;" Rom. viii. 35—37. They obtain a nobler conquest than that which is obtained by the sword.

2. But the weak Christian having less patience, and more selfishness and passion, is more easily tempted to break his bounds, and with Peter run to his unauthorized sword, when he should submit to suffering; Matt. xxvi. 51, 52. And his interest and sufferings cause his passion to have too great a power on his judgment, so that he is more easily tempted to believe that to be lawful which he thinks to be necessary to his own preservation; and to think that the Gospel and the church are falling, when the power of men is turned against them; and therefore he must with Uzzah put forth his hand to save the ark of God from falling. He is more troubled at men's injustice and cruelty, and maketh a wonder of it, to find the enemies of Christ and godliness to be unreasonably impudent and bloody; as if he expected reason and righteousness in the malicious world. His sufferings fill him more with discontent, and desires of revenge from God; Luke ix. 54. and his prosperity too much lifts him up; 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. And in the litigious titles of pretenders to supremacy, he is oft too hasty to interest himself in their contentions, as if he understood not that whoever is the conqueror will count those rebels that were on the other side; and that the enemies of Christ will cast all the odium upon Christianity and piety, when the controversy is only among the statesmen and lawyers, and belongs not to religion at all.

3. The seeming Christian will seem to excel all others in loyalty and obedience, when it maketh for his carnal ends: he will flatter rulers for honours and preferment, and always be on the rising side, unless when his pride engageth him in murmurings and rebellions. He hath a great advantage above true Christians and honest men, to seem the most obedient subject; because he hath a stretching conscience, that

can do any thing for his safety or his worldly ends. If he be among Papists, he can be a Papist; if among Protestants, he is a Protestant; and if he were among Turks, it is likely he would rather turn a Mahometan than be undone. No prince or power can command him any thing which he cannot yield to, if his worldly interest require it. If there be a law for worshipping the golden image, it is the conscionable servants of God, and not the time-servers, that refuse to obey it; Dan. iii. If there be a law against praying, (Dan. vi.) it is Daniel, and not the ungodly multitude that disobey it. If there be a command against preaching, (Acts iv. 17, 18.) it is the holy apostles and best Christians that plead the command of God against it, and refuse obedience to it; (ver. 20, 29.) The self-seeking, temporizing hypocrite can do any thing; and yet he obeyeth not, while he seemeth to obey: for it is not for the authority of the commander that he doth it, but for his own ends. He never truly honoureth his superiors; for he doth not respect them as the officers of God, nor obey them for his sake with a conscionable obedience. He feareth the higher powers as bears or tigers, that are able to hurt him; or useth their favour as he useth his horse, to do him service. Were it not for himself, he would little regard them. The true Christian honoureth the basest creature more than the hypocrite and worldling honoureth his king: for he seeth God in all, and useth the smallest things unto his glory; whereas the worldling debaseth the highest, by the baseness of his esteem, and use, and end: for he knoweth not how to esteem or use the greatest prince, but for himself or for some worldly ends; 2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.

XLIX. 1. A Christian indeed is a man of courage and fortitude in every cause of God; for he trusteth God, and firmly believeth that he will bear him out. He knoweth his superiors, and hath a charitable respect to all men: but as for any selfish or timorous respect, he hath the least regard to man. For he knoweth that the greatest are but worms, whose breath is in their nostrils, that pass away as shadows, and return to dust; and that the most potent are impotent when they contend with God, and are unequal matches to strive against their Maker; and that it will prove hard for them to kick against the pricks; and that whoever seemeth now to have the day, it is God that will be conqueror at last.

Job xxv. 6. xvii. 14. xxiv. 20. Psal. lxxix. 31. ciii. 16. cxliv. 3—5. Acts ix. 4—6. “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help; his breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God.” “Woe to him that striveth with his Maker;” Isa. xlv. 9. He knoweth that it is more irrational to fear man against God, than to fear a flea or a fly against the greatest man. The infinite disproportion between the creature that is against him, and the Creator that is for him, doth resolve him to obey the command of Christ; “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him;” Luke xii. 4. “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproof of man, neither be afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation;” Isa. lvii. 7, 8. “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint; and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together; who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me: who is he that shall condemn me? Lo! they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up;” Isa. l. 6—9. xxxv. 4. xli. 10, 13, 14. vii. 4. Jer. xlvi. 27, 28. Matt. x. 26, 31. “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of;” Isa. ii. 22. “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, &c. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, &c.” Jer. xvii. 5, 8, 9. Alas, how terrible is the wrath of God, in comparison of the wrath of man! And how easy an enemy is the cruellest afflicter, in comparison of a holy, sin-revenging God. Therefore the confirmed Christian saith as the three witnesses; Dan. iii. 16—18. “We are not careful to answer thee in this matter: the God whom we serve is able

to deliver us.—But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” When Daniel knew that the decree was past, he prayed openly in his house, as heretofore; Dan. vi. 10. Moses “feared not the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible;” Heb. xi. 27. “The righteous is bold as a lion;” Prov. xxviii. 1. “When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled;” Acts iv. 13. Paul’s bonds made others bold; 2 Cor. xi. 21. Ephes. vi. 19, 20. Acts iv. 29, 31. “Perfect love casteth out fear;” 1 John iv. 18. “If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;” 1 Pet. iii. 14. “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me;” Heb. xiii. 6.

2. But the weak Christian, though he also trust in God, is much more fearful, and easily daunted and discouraged; and ready with Peter to be afraid, if he perceive himself in danger; Matt. xxvi. 69. He is not “valiant for the truth;” Jer. ix. 3. Though he can forsake all (even life itself) for Christ, (Luke xiv. 26, 33.) yet is it with a deal of fear and trouble. And man is a more significant thing to him than to the stronger Christian.

3. But the seeming Christian doth fear man more than God, and will venture upon the displeasure of God, to avoid the displeasure of men that can do him hurt; because he doth not soundly believe the threatenings of the word of God.

L. 1. A Christian indeed is made up of judgment and zeal conjunct. His judgment is not a patron of lukewarmness, nor his zeal an enemy to knowledge. His judgment doth not destroy, but increase his zeal; and his zeal is not blind nor self-conceited, nor doth run before, or without judgment. If he be of the most excellent sort of Christians, he hath so large a knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, that he seeth the body of sacred truth with its parts, and compages, or joints, as it were at once. It is all written deeply and methodically in his understanding; he hath by long use his senses exercised, to discern both good and evil; Heb. v. 14. He presently discerneth where mistaken men go out of the way, and lose the truth, by false suppositions, or by false definitions, or by confounding things that differ.

And therefore he pitieth the contentious sects and disputers, who raise a dust to blind themselves and others, and make a stir to the trouble of the church, about things which they never understood: and in the sight of that truth which others obscure and contradict, he enjoyeth much content or pleasure in his own mind, though incapable persons zealously reject it. Therefore he is steadfast, as knowing on what ground he setteth his foot. And though he be the greatest lover of truth, and would with greatest joy receive any addition to his knowledge, yet ordinarily by erroneous zealots he is censured as too stiff, and self-conceited, and tenacious of his own opinions, because he will not entertain their errors, and obey them in their self-conceitedness. For he that knoweth that it is truth which he holdeth, is neither able nor willing to hold the contrary, (unless he imprison the truth in unrighteousness). But if he be one that hath not attained to such a clear, comprehensive judgment, yet with that measure of judgment which he hath, he doth guide and regulate his zeal, and maketh it follow after, while understanding goeth before. He treadeth on sure ground, and knoweth it to be duty indeed which he is zealous for, and sin indeed which he is zealous against; and is not put to excuse all his favour and forwardness after, with a 'non putarem,' or, 'I had thought it had been otherwise;' 1 Cor. i. 5. 2 Cor. viii. 7. Col. iii. 16. iv. 12.

2. But the weak Christian either hearkeneth too much to carnal wisdom, which suppresseth his zeal, and maketh him too heavy, and dull, and indifferent in many of his duties, and the concernments of his soul, permitting the world to take up too much of the vigour of his spirit; or else he is confident in his mistakes, and verily thinks that he understandeth better than many wiser men, those things which he never understood at all. He chooseth his party by the zeal that he findeth in them, without any judicious trial of the truth of what they hold and teach. He is very earnest for many a supposed truth and duty, which proveth at last to be no truth or duty at all; and he censureth many a wiser Christian than himself, for many a supposed sin, which is no sin, but perhaps a duty. For he is always injudicious, and his heat is greater than his light, or else his light is too flashy without heat. Peremptorily he doth set down some

among the number of the most wise and excellent men, for keeping him company in his mistakes : and he boldly numbereth the best and wisest of his teachers with the transgressors, for being of a sounder understanding than himself, and doing those duties which he calleth sins. And hence it is that he is a person apt to be misled by appearances of zeal ; and the passions of his teachers prevail more with him than the evidence of truth. He that prayeth and preacheth most fervently is the man that carrieth him away, though none of his arguments should be truly cogent. If he hear any hard name against any opinion, or manner of worship, he receiveth that prejudice which turneth him more against it than reason could have done. So the bugbear names of Heresy, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, frighteneth many a well-meaning Papist both from the truth, and almost from his wits. And the names of Popery, Arminianism, Prelacy, Presbyterianism, Independency, &c. do turn away the hearts of many from things which they never tried or understood. If a zealous preacher do but call any opinion or practice antichristian or idolatrous, it is a more effectual terror than the clearest proof. Big and terrible words do move the passions, while the understanding is abused, or a stranger to the cause. And passion is much of their religion. And hence, alas ! is much of the calamity of the church ; Rom. xiv. 1—4, &c. 1 Cor. iii. 1—4. Acts xxi. 20. Gal. iv. 17, 18.

3. But the seeming Christian is only zealous finally for himself, or zealous about the smaller matters of religion, as the Pharisees were for their ceremonies and traditions, or for his own inventions, or some opinions or ways, in which his honour seemeth to be interested, and pride is the bellows of his zeal. But as for a holy zeal about the substance and practice of religion, and that for God as the final cause, he is a stranger to it. He may have a zeal of God, and of and for the law and worship of God as the material cause, but not a true zeal for God, as the chief final cause ; Rom. x. 2. 2 Sam. xxi. 2. 2 Kings x. 16. Acts xxii. 3.

LI. 1. A Christian indeed can bear the infirmities of the weak : though he love not their weakness, yet he pitieth it, because he truly loveth their persons. Christ hath taught him not to break the bruised reed, and to “gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young ;” Isa. xl. 11. xlii. 3. If they

have diseases and distempers, he seeketh in tenderness to cure them, and not in wrath to hurt or vex them. He turneth not the infants or sick persons from the family, because they cry, or are unquiet, unclean, infirm, and troublesome; but he exerciseth his love and pity upon their weaknesses. If they mistake their way, or are ignorant, and peevish, and froward in their mistakes, he seeketh not to undo them, but gently to reduce them. If they censure him, and call him erroneous, heretical, antichristian, idolatrous, because he concurreth not with them in their mistakes, he beareth it with love and patience, as he would do the peevish chidings of a child, or the frowardness of the sick. He doth not lose his charity, and set his wit against a child, and aggravate the crimes, and being reviled revile again; and say, 'You are schismatics, hypocrites, obstinate, and fit to be severely dealt with.' But he overcometh them with love and patience, which is the conquest of a saint, and the happiest victory both for himself and them. It is a "small matter to him to be judged of man;" 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He is more troubled for the weakness and disease of the censorious, than for his own being wronged by their censures; Phil. i. 16—18. Rom. xv. 1—3. xiv. 2, 3.

2. But the weak Christian is more ready to censure others, than patiently to bear a censure himself. Either he stormeth against the censurers, as if they did him some unsufferable wrong (through the over-great esteem of himself and his reputation), or else, to escape the fangs of censure, and keep up his repute with them, he complieth with the censorious, and overruns his judgment and conscience to be well-spoken of, and counted a sincere and steadfast man; Gal. ii. 12—14.

3. But the seeming Christian is so proud and selfish, and wanteth charity and tenderness to the weak, that he is impatient of their provocations; and would cure the diseases of the servants of Christ, by cutting their throats, or ridding the country of them. If a child do but wrangle with him, he crieth, 'Away with him, he is a troubler of the world.' He taketh more notice of one of their infirmities, than of all their graces; yea, he can see nothing but obstinacy and hypocrisy in them, if they do but cross him in his opinions, or reputation, or worldly ends. Selfishness can turn his hypocrisy into malignity and cruelty, if once he

take them to be against his interest. Indeed his interest can make him patient : he can bear with them that he looketh to gain by, but not with them that seem to be against him. The radical enmity against sincerity, that was not mortified, but covered in his heart, will easily be again uncovered ; Mark vi. 18.20—22. Phil.i. 15, 16. 3 John 9.

LII. 1. A Christian indeed is a great esteemer of the unity of the church, and greatly averse to all divisions among believers. As there is in the natural body an abhorring of dismembering or separating any part from the whole ; so there is in the mystical body of Christ. The members that have life, cannot but feel the smart of any distempering attempt ; for abscission is destruction : the members die that are separated from the body. And if there be but any obstruction or hindrance of communion, they will be painful or unuseful. He feeleth in himself the reason of all those strict commands, and earnest exhortations : “ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment ;” 1 Cor.i. 10. “ If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory ; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others ;” Phil.ii. 1—4. “ I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ :” Ephes.iv. 2—7. Read also chap. iv. 12—16. 1 Cor. xii. throughout. He looketh at uncharitableness, and divisions, with more abhorrence than weak Christians do at drunkenness or whoredom, or such other heinous sin. He

feareth such dreadful warnings, as Acts xx. 29, 30. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own-selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And he cannot slight such a vehement exhortation, as Rom. xvi. 17, 18. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." Therefore he is so far from being a divider himself, that when he seeth any one making divisions among Christians, he looketh on him as one that is slashing and mangling the body of his dearest friend, or as one that is setting fire on his house, and therefore doth all that he can to quench it; as knowing the confusion and calamity to which it tendeth. He is of a Christian, and therefore of a truly catholic spirit; that is, he maketh not himself a member of a divided party, or a sect; he regardeth the interest and welfare of the body, the universal church, above the interest or prosperity of any party whatsoever; and he will do nothing for a party which is injurious to the whole, or to the Christian cause. The very names of sects and parties are displeasing to him; and he could wish that there were no name but that of Christians among us, save only the necessary names of the criminal, such as that of the Nicolaitans; Rev. ii. 6. 15. By which those that are to be avoided by Christians must be known. Christianity is confined to so narrow a compass in the world, that he is unwilling to contract it yet into a narrower. The greatest party of divided Christians, whether it be the Greeks or Papists, is too small a body for him to take for the catholic, or universal church. He admireth at the blindness and cruelty of faction, that can make men damn all the rest of the church for the interest of their proper sect; and take all those as no Christians that are better Christians than themselves. Especially the Papists, who unchurch all the church of Christ, except their sect, and make it as necessary to salvation to be a subject of the pope, as to be a Christian. And when, by their great corruption and abuses of Christianity, they have more need of charitable censures themselves than almost any sort of Christians, yet are they

the boldest condemners of all others. The confirmed Christian can difference between the strong and weak, the sound and unsound members of the church, without dismembering any, and without unwarrantable separations from any. He will worship God in the purest manner he can, and locally join with those assemblies, where, all things considered, he may most honour God, and receive most edification; and will not sin for communion with any. He will sufficiently difference between a holy, orderly assembly, and a corrupt, disordered one; and between an able, faithful pastor, and an ignorant or worldly hireling. And he desireth that the pastors of the church may make that due separation by the holy discipline of Christ, which may prevent the people's disorderly separation. But for all this, he will not deny his presence upon just occasion, to any Christian congregation that worshippeth God in truth, though with many modal imperfections, so be it, they impose no sin upon him as necessary to his communion with them. Nor will he deny the spiritual communion of faith and love to those that he holdeth not local communion with. He knows that all our worship of God is sinfully imperfect, and that it is a dividing principle to hold, that we may join with none that worship God in a faulty manner; for then we must join with none on earth. He knoweth that his presence in the worship of God, is no sign of his approbation of all the failings of pastors or people, in their personal or modal imperfections, as long as he joineth not in a worship so corrupt as to be itself unacceptable to God. While men who are all imperfect and corrupt, are the worshippers, the manner of their worship will be such as they, in some degree, imperfect and corrupt. The solid Christian hath his eye upon all the churches in the world, in the determining of such questions; he considereth what worship is offered to God in the churches of the several parties of Christians, the Greeks, Armenians, Abassines, Lutherans, &c. as well as what is done in the country where he liveth; and he considereth whether God disown and reject the worship of almost all the churches in the world, or not; for he dare no further reject them than God rejecteth them. Nor will he voluntarily separate from those assemblies where the presence of Christ, in his Spirit and acceptance, yet remaineth. And his fuller acquaintance with the gracious nature, office, and tenderness of

Christ, together with greater love to his brethren, doth cause him in this to judge more gently than young censorious Christians do. And his humble acquaintance with his own infirmities, maketh him the more compassionate to others. If he should think that God would reject all that order not, and word not their prayers aright, he would be afraid of being rejected himself, who is still conscious of greater faultiness in his own prayers, than a mere defect in words and order; even of a great defectiveness in that faith, and desire, and love, and zeal, and reverence which should be manifested in prayer. Though he be more apprehensive than others, of the excellency and necessity of the holiness and spirituality of the soul in worship; yet withal he is more judicious and charitable than the peevish and passionate infant Christians, who think that God doth judge as they do, and seeth no grace where they see none; and taketh all to be superstitious or fanatical, that differ from their opinions or manner of worship; or that he is as ready to call every error, in the method or the words of prayer, idolatry or will-worship, as those are that speak not what they know, but what they have heard some teachers whom they reverence, say before them. "He that dwelleth in love, doth dwell in God, and God in him." And he that dwelleth in God, is liker to be best acquainted with his mind, concerning his children and his worship, than he that dwelleth in wrath, and pride, and partiality.

2. But the weak Christian (though so far as he hath grace, he is of the same mind, and abhorreth discord and division among the flock of Christ, yet) being more dark, and selfish, and distempered, he is much more prone to unwarrantable separations and divisions than the stronger Christian is. He is narrower sighted, and looketh little further than his own acquaintance, and the country where he liveth; and mindeth not sufficiently the general state of the churches through the world, nor understandeth well the interest of Christ and Christianity in the earth. His knowledge and experience being small, his charity also is but small; and a little thing tempteth him to condemn another, and aggravate his faults, and think him unworthy of the communion of the saints. He is much more sensible of the judgment, and affections, and concernments of those few with whom he doth converse, and that are of his opinion,

than of the judgment, and practice, and concernments of the universal church. He knoweth not how to prefer the judgments and holiness of some that he thinketh more excellent than the rest, without much undervaluing and censuring of all others that are not of their opinion : he cannot choose the actual local communion of the best society, without some unjust contempt of others, or separation from them. He hath not so much knowledge as may sufficiently acquaint him with his ignorance ; and therefore he is apt to be unreasonably confident of his present apprehensions, and to think verily that all his own conceptions are the certain truth ; and to think them ignorant, or ungodly, or very weak at least, that differ from him. For he hath not thoroughly and impartially studied all that may be said on the other side. The authority of his chosen teacher and sect, is greater with him (if he fall into that way) than the authority of all the most wise and holy persons in the world besides. What the Scripture speaketh of the unbelieving world, he is apt to apply to all those of the church of Christ, that are not of his mind and party. And when Christ commandeth us to come out of the world, he is prone to understand it of coming out from the church into some stricter and narrower society ; and is apt with the papists, to appropriate the name and privileges of the church, to his party alone, and to condemn all others. Especially if the church-governors be carnal and self-seeking, or otherwise very culpable ; and if discipline be neglected, and if profaneness be not sufficiently discountenanced, and godliness promoted, he thinketh that such a church is no church, but a profane society. God hath taught him by repentance to see the mischief of ungodliness, but he yet wanteth that experience which is needful to make him know the mischief of church divisions. He had too much experience himself, of the evil of profaneness before his conversion ; but he hath not tried the evil of schism ; and without some sad experience of its fruits, in himself or others, he will hardly know it as it should be known : because it is the custom of some malignant enemies of godliness, to call the godly heretics, schismatics, factious sectaries, &c. therefore the very names do come into credit with him ; and he thinks there are no such persons in the world, or that there is no danger of any such crimes, till he be taught by sad experience, that the professors of sincerity are in as much danger

on that side as on the other; and that the church, as well as Christ, doth suffer between two thieves, the profane and the dividers. Paul was unjustly called the ringleader of a sect, Acts xxiv. 5.), and Christianity called a heresy and a sect, every where spoken against; Acts xxviii. 22. xxiv. 14. But for all that, heresy is a fruit of the flesh, (Gal. v. 20.) and some of them called damnable; (2 Pet. ii. 1.) and they are the trial of the church, to difference the approved members from the chaff; 1 Cor. xi. 19. And an obstinate heretic is to be avoided by true believers; Titus iii. 10. And the Pharisees and Sadducees are well reputed to be several sects; Acts v. 17. xv. 5. xxvi. 5. And dividers and divisions are justly branded as aforesaid. There must be no schism in the body of Christ; 1 Cor. xii. 25. The following of selected teachers, in a way of division from the rest, or opposition to them, doth shew, that men are carnal in too great a measure, though it be not in predominancy, as in the profane. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal. For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?” 2 Cor. iii. 1—3. How much more when he that is for Paul doth censure and rail at Cephas and Apollos? He that hath seen the course of men professing godliness in England in this age, may easily and sadly know how prone weak Christians are to unjust separations and divisions, and what are the effects. He that had heard many zealous in prayer, and other duties, and the next year see them turning Quakers, and railing in the open congregations at the most able, holy, self-denying ministers of Christ, and at their flocks, with a ‘Come down thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou wolf, ye are all greedy dogs,’ &c. and shall see how yet poor souls run into that reviling, and irrational sect (to say nothing of all other sects among us,) will no longer doubt whether the weak be inclined to schism, but will rather lament the dangerousness of their station; and know that all is not done when a sinner is converted from an ungodly state. Study the reason of those three texts; Ephes. iv. 13—16. “For the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, so that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love." Here you see the children are apt to be carried into dividing parties. And that they are more apt to be proud, and that way to miscarry, see 1 Tim. iii. 6. "Not a novice (or raw young Christian) lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil," and then followeth the effect, Acts xx. 30. "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." I would not have you groundlessly accuse any Christian with a charge of pride; but I must tell you that the childish pride of apparel is a petty business, in comparison of that pride which many in sordid attire have manifested, who in their ignorance do rage and foam out words of falsehood and reproach against Christ's ministers and servants, as if they were fools or impious in comparison of them, speaking evil of that which they never understood. The lifting up the heart above the people of the Lord, in the pride of supposed holiness, is incomparably worse than pride of learning, honour, greatness, wit, or wealth. Nay, it hath often been to me a matter of wonder to observe how little all those plain and urgent texts of Scripture, which cry down division, do work upon many of the younger Christians, who yet are as quickly touched as any, with a text that speaketh against profaneness and lukewarmness. In a word, they are often of the temper of James and John, when they would fain have had Christ revenged himself on his opposers by fire from heaven; "They know not what manner of spirit they are of;" Luke ix. 55. They think verily that it is a holy zeal for God, when it is the boiling of passion, pride, and selfishness. They feel not the sense of such words as Christ's, "I pray also for them who shall believe on me, through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in

me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;" &c. John xvii. 20—24.

3. And as for the seeming Christian, in this they are of several sorts. When their carnal interest lieth in compliance with the major part and stronger side, then no men do more cry up unity and obedience. What a noise do many thousand Papist prelates, Jesuits, and friars make with these two words throughout the world. Unity and obedience (unto them upon their terms) do signify principally their worldly greatness, wealth, and power. But if the hypocrite be engaged in point of honour, or other carnal interest on the suffering side, or be out of hope of any advantage, in the common road, then no man is so much for separation and singularity as he. For he must needs be noted for somebody in the world, and this is the chief way that he findeth to accomplish it. And so being "lifted up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil," and becomes a firebrand in the church.

LIII. 1. A Christian indeed, is not only zealous for the unity and concord of believers, but he seeketh it on the right terms, and in the way that is fittest to attain it. Unity, peace, and concord, are like piety and honesty, things so unquestionably good, that there are scarce any men of reason and common sobriety, that ever were heard to oppose them directly and for themselves: and therefore all that are enemies to them are yet pretenders to them; and oppose them. 1. In their causes only. 2. Or covertly, and under some other name. Every man would have unity, concord, and peace in his own way, and upon his own terms. But if the right terms had been understood and consented to as sufficient, the Christian world had not lain so many hundred years in the sin, and shame, and ruins as it hath done. And the cause of all is, that Christians indeed, that have clear, confirmed judgments, and strength of grace, are very few; and for number and strength, unable to persuade or overrule the weak, the passionate, and the false-hearted, worldly, hypocritical multitude; who bear down all the counsels and endeavours of the wise.

The judicious, faithful Christian knoweth, that there are three degrees or sorts of Christian communion, which have their several terms. 1. The universal church commu-

nion, which all Christians as such must hold among themselves. 2. Particular church communion, which those that are conjoined for personal communion in worship, do hold under the same pastors and among themselves. 3. The extraordinary intimate communion that some Christians hold together, who are bosom friends, or are especially able and fit to be helpful and comfortable to each other.

The last concerneth not our present business ; we must hold church communion with many that are unfit to be our bosom friends, and that have no eminency of parts or piety, or any strong persuading evidence of sincerity. But the terms of catholic communion he knoweth are such as these. 1. They must be such as were the terms of church communion in the days of the apostles. 2. They must be such as are plainly and certainly expressed in the holy Scriptures. 3. And such as the universal church hath in some ages since been actually agreed in. 4. And those points are most likely to be such, which all the differing parties of Christians are agreed in, as necessary to communion to this day, (so we call not those Christians that deny the essentials of Christianity). 5. Every man in the former ages of the church, was admitted to this catholic church communion, who in the baptismal vow or covenant, gave up himself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier ; his Owner, Governor, and Father, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil. And more particularly, as man hath an understanding, a will, and an executive power, which must all be sanctified to God, so the creed was the particular rule for the ‘ credenda’ or things to be believed, and the Lord’s prayer for the ‘ petenda’ or things to be willed, loved, and desired, and the ten commandments for the ‘ agenda,’ or things to be done ; so that to consent to these rules particularly, and to all the holy Scriptures implicitly and generally, was the thing then required to catholic communion. The belief of the doctrine being necessary for the sanctifying of the heart and life, the belief of so much is of necessity, without which the heart cannot be sanctified, or devoted in covenant to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator ; and without which we cannot love God (as reconciled to us in Christ) above all, and our neighbours as ourselves. So that, in a word, he that can tell what the baptismal vow or covenant is, can tell what is necessary

to that catholic church communion, which belongeth to Christians as Christians, at how great a distance soever they dwell from one another.

And then for particular church communion, which is local and personal, it is moreover necessary, 1. That each member acknowledge and submit to the same pastors. 2. That they be guided by them in the convenient circumstances and adjuncts of worship. For if some persons will not consent or submit to the same pastors that the body of the church consenteth and submitteth to, they cannot have communion particularly and locally with that church, nor are they members of it, no more than they can be members of the same kingdom that have not the same king. And there being no solemn worship performed but by the ministry of those pastors, they cannot join in the worship that join not with the minister. And if some members will not consent and submit to the necessary determination of the adjuncts or external modes of worship, they cannot join in local, particular church communion where that worship is performed. As if the pastor and the body of the church will meet in such a place, at such a day and hour, and some members will not meet with them at that place, and day, and hour, they cannot possibly then have their local, personal communion. Or if the pastor will use such a translation of the Scriptures, or such a version of the Psalms, or such a method in preaching and prayer, or such notes or books, and other like helps; if any members will not submit, nor hold communion with the rest, unless that translation, or version, or method of preaching or praying, or notes or books be laid aside, he cannot have communion while he refuseth it. If the pastor, and all the rest will not yield to him, he must join with some other church that he can agree with. And as long as the catholic church communion is maintained (which consisteth in unity, of the Christian covenant, or of Christianity, or of faith, love, and obedience), the difference of modes and circumstances between particular churches, must be allowed without any breach of charity, or without disowning one another. And he that cannot be a member of one particular church, may quietly join himself to another, without condemning that which he dissenteth from, so far as to hinder his catholic communion with it, (even as among the papists, men may

be of which order or of religious persons they best like, as long as they submit to their general government). And here the strong, judicious Christian for his part, will never be guilty of church divisions. For, 1. He will make nothing necessary to church communion, which any sober, pious, peaceable minds shall have any just reason to except against, or which may not well be manifested to be for the edification of the church. 2. And he will bear with the weak dissenters so far as will stand with the peace and welfare of the church. 3. And he will particularly give leave to such weak ones as cannot yet hold communion with him, being peaceable, and not promoting heresy, ungodliness, or sedition, to join to another church where they can hold communion with peace to their own consciences; as long as they continue their foresaid catholic communion. For the strong know that they must not only bear with, but bear the "infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves, but every one of them to please his neighbour for good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself." And so they will "receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God, not despising the weak, nor rejecting them that God receiveth;" Rom. xv. 1—3. 7. xiv. 1—4. 17, 18. And thus you may see how easy a matter it were to unite and reconcile all the Christian world, if the principles of the judicious, confirmed Christian might be received and prevail; and that it is not he that is the cause of the abundance of sin and calamity which divisions have caused, and continued in the church. But that which now seemeth an impossible thing, may quickly and easily be accomplished if all were such as he. And that the difficulty of reconciling and uniting Christians, lieth not first in finding out the terms, but in making men fit to receive and practise the terms from the beginning received by the churches. This is Lirinensis's '*Quod semper, ubique; et ab omnibus receptum est:*' supposing still that the magistrate be submitted to by every soul, even as he is the keeper of both tables; Rom. xiii. 1—3.

2. But the weak Christian is too easily tempted to be the divider of the church, by expecting that it be united upon his impossible or unrighteous terms. Sometimes he will be orthodox overmuch, or rather wise in his own conceit (Rom. xii. 16.), and then none are judged fit for his com-

munion that be not of his opinion, in controverted doctrinals, (e. g. predestination, the manner of the work of grace, freewill, perseverance, and abundance such). Sometimes he will be righteous overmuch, or (to speak more properly) superstitious ; and then none are fit for his communion that worship not God in that method and manner for circumstantials, which he esteemed best. And his charity is so weak, that it freeth him not from thinking evil (1 Cor. xiii.), and so narrow, that it covereth not either many or great infirmities. The more need he hath of the forbearance and charity of others, the less can he bear or forbear others himself. The strong Christian must bear the infirmities of the weak ; but the weak Christian can scarce bear with the weak or strong. Nay, he is oft too impatient with some of their virtues and duties, as well as with their infirmities. He is of too private a spirit, and too insensible of the public interest of the church of Christ. And therefore he must have all the world come over to him, and be conformed to his opinion and party, and unite upon his mistaken, narrow terms, if they will have communion with him. I mean, it is thus with him, when the temptation on that side prevaleth. And sometimes he is overcome with the temptation of domination, to make his judgment a rule to others ; and then he quite overvalueth his own understanding, and will needs be judge of all the controversies in the church ; and taketh it as unsufferable, if wiser and better men do not take him as infallible, and in every thing observe his will. And when his brethren give him the reason of their dissent, as his judgment is not clear enough to understand them, so his passion and partiality are too strong to suffer his judgment to do its part. And thus oftentimes he is a greater hindrance to the church's unity, than the enemies of the church themselves. For he hath not judgment enough to guide him the right way, and yet he hath so much zeal as will not suffer him to keep his errors to him.

3. And all these distempers that are but in a lower degree in the weak Christian, are predominant in the hypocrite. The church shall have no concord or peace if he can hinder it, but what is consistent with his carnal interest, his honour, or wealth, or dignity in the world. The pride and covetousness which rule himself, he would have to make the terms of concord, and to rule all others. It is hypocrites

in the church that are the greatest cause of discord and divisions, having selfish spirits, principles, and ends, and having always a work of their own to do, which suits not well with the work of Christ; and yet Christ's work must be subjected to it, and ordered, and overruled by it. And while they pretend to go to the Scriptures, or to councils or fathers for their reasons, indeed they go first for them to their worldly interest; and then would fain hire or press the Scripture, church, or fathers to serve their turn, and come in as witnesses on their side. And thus the church, as well as Christ, is betrayed by the covetous Judases of his own family. And the servants of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that take up the livery of Christ, and usurp the name and honour of Christian, do more effectually hinder the concord and prosperity of the church, than any open enemies do. And those that are indeed no Christians, do cause Christianity to be reproached; even as spies and traitors that are hired by the enemy to take up arms in the army which they fight against, that they may betray it by their fraud, and do more harm to it by raising mutinies, and by false conduct, than a multitude of professed enemies could have done. It is proud, and worldly, carnal hypocrites, that hinder most the concord of believers.

LIV. 1. A confirmed Christian is of a peaceable spirit. He is not masterly, domineering, turbulent, hurtful, cruel, seditious, factious, or contentious. He is like ripened fruits that are mellow and sweet, when the younger, greener fruits are sour and harsh. He is not wise in his own conceit, (Rom. xii. 16.), and therefore not over-urgent in obtruding his conceits on others, not quarrelsome with all that cannot entertain them, nor will he easily lay men's salvation or damnation, no, nor the church's peace upon them. He is "kindly affectioned to others with brotherly love, yea, loveth his neighbour as himself;" ver. 10. xiii. 9, 10. And therefore he doth to others as he would they should do to him; and uses them as he would be used by them. And then how far they are like to suffer by him, you may easily judge. For "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour;" ver. 10. He is above the portion of the worldling, and a contemner of that vanity which carnal men account their felicity; and therefore he preferreth love and quietness before it, and can lose his right when the interest of love and peace

requireth it. He is become as a little child in his conversion (Matt. xviii. 3.), and is low and little in his own eyes, and therefore contendeth not for superiority or preeminence, either in place or power, or reputation of his learning, wisdom, or piety ; but “ in honour preferreth others” before himself ;” Rom. xii. 10. “ He mindeth not high things, but condescendeth to men of low estate ;” Rom. xii. 16. And therefore will not contend for estimation and precedency, nor scramble to be highest, though he rise by the ruins of men’s bodies and souls. “ If it be possible as much as lieth in him, he will live peaceably with all men ;” ver. 18. For he is not one that by word or deed will avenge himself ; but when the wrath of others is up like a blustering storm, he giveth place to it, he boweth before it, or goeth out of the way. “ If his enemy hunger, he feedeth him ; if he thirst, he giveth him drink ;” ver. 19. when oppressors would deprive not only an enemy, but the righteous of their meat and drink : and thus he melteth his hardened enemies by heaping kindness upon them when they are wrathful, and proud, and contentious, and do him wrong, or use provoking words against him, he is not overcome of their evil to imitate them, but he overcometh their evil with his good ; ver. 20, 21. If God hath given him more knowledge and abilities than others, he doth not presently set up himself to be admired for it, nor speak disdainfully or contemptuously of those that are not of his mind. But he sheweth the eminency of his wisdom, “ with meekness by the works of a good conversation,” and by doing better than the unwiser do ; James iii. 1—13. He is endued with the “ wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality” (or wavering in persecution, as Dr. Hammond renders it), and without hypocrisy. And thus the “ fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace ;” James iii. 17, 18. As he is “ taught of God to love his brother ;” 1 Thess. iv. 9. So that same teaching with experience of the effects assureth him, that they that pretend to be wiser and better than others, when “ they have bitter, envious zeal and strife in their hearts, they vainly glory and lie against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where envying and strife

is, there is confusion and every evil work ;” James iii. 14, 15, 16. (Read but the story of the Jewish zealots in Josephus, and the heretical zealots in all ages of the church, and you will perceive the truth of this.) When such quarrelsome spirits are filling the church with contentions, or vexations about their meats and drinks, and days, &c. the Christian indeed understandeth that ‘ the kingdom of God consisteth’ not of such things as these, ‘ but in right eousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ;’ and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approveth of (wise and sober) men. Therefore he followeth after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another : and will not for meats, &c. destroy the work of God ;” Rom. xiv. 17—20. He stayeth not till peace be offered him, or brought home to him, but ‘ he followeth peace with all men, as well as holiness ;” Heb. xii. 14. If it fly from him, he pursueth it ; if it be denied him he seeketh it, and will not refuse to stoop to the poorest for it, and to beg it of his inferiors, if it were upon his knees, rather than be denied it, and live an unpeaceable, disquiet life ; Psalm xxxiv. 14. For he believeth that “ blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God ;” Matt. v. 9.

2. And the weak Christian hath the same spirit, and therefore the love of peace is most predominant in him. But, alas, he is too easily tempted into religious passions, discontents, contentious disputations, quarrelsome and opprobrious words ; and his judgment lamentably darkened and perverted, whenever contentious zeal prevaieth, and passions do perturb the quiet and orderly operations of the soul. He wanteth both the knowledge and the experience, and the mellowness of spirit, which riper Christians have attained ; he hath a less degree of charity, and is less acquainted with the mischiefs of unpeaceableness ; and therefore it is the common course of young professors, to be easily tempted into unpeaceable ways ; and when they have long tried them (if they prove not hypocrites) to come off at last upon experience of the evils of them ; and so the young Christians, conjunct with some hypocrites, make up the rigorous, fierce, contentious and vexatious party ; and the aged, ripe Christians make up the holy, moderate, healing party, that groan and pray for the church’s peace, and

mourn in secret both for the ungodliness and violence which they cannot heal. Yea, the difference is much apparent, in the books and sermons which each of them is best pleased with. The ripe, experienced Christian loveth those sermons that kindle love, and tend to peace; and love such healing books as do narrow differences and tend to reconcile and heal; such as Bishop Hall's *Peace-maker*, and "*Pax terris*," and all his writings; and Bishop Davenant's, Bishop Morton's, and Bishop Hall's "*Pacificatory Epistles to Duræus*," and "*Mr. Burroughs' Irenicon*," Ludov. Crotius, Amyraldus, Junius, Paræus's and many other Irenicons written by foreign divines, to say nothing that are upon single controversies. But the younger, sour, uncharitable Christians are better pleased with such books and sermons, as call them aloud to be very zealous for this or that contested point of doctrine, or for or against some circumstance of worship or church discipline, or about some fashions, or customs, or indifferent things, as if the kingdom of God were in them: Rom. xiv. 1, 2. 15, 16.

3. But the seeming Christian, is either a mere temporizer, that will be of that religion, whatever it be, that is most in fashion, or which the higher powers are of, or which will cost him least: or else he will run into the other extreme, and lift up himself by affected singularities, and by making a bustle and stir in the world, about some small and controverted point: and careth not to sacrifice the peace and safety of the church, to the honour of his own opinions. And as small as the Christian church is, he must be of a smaller society than it, that he may be sure to be amongst the best; while indeed he hath no sincerity at all, but placeth his hopes in being of the right church, or party, or opinion: and for his party or church, he burneth with a feverish kind of zeal, and is ready to call for fire from heaven; and to deceive him, the devil sendeth him some from hell, to consume them that are not of his mind: yet doth he bring it as an angel of light, to defend the truth and church of Christ. And indeed, when the devil will be the defender of truth, or of the church, or of peace, or order, or piety, he doth it with the most burning zeal: you may know him by the means he useth. He defendeth the church, by forbidding the people to read the Scriptures in a known tongue, and by imprisoning and burning the soundest and holiest members of it, and

abusing the most learned faithful pastors; and defendeth the flock by casting out the shepherds, and such like means, as the murders of the Waldenses, and the massacres of France and Ireland, and the Spanish Inquisition, and queen Mary's bonfires, and the powder-plot; yea, and the Munster, and the English rage and phrenzies, may give you fuller notice of. He that hath no holiness, nor charity to be zealous for, will be zealous for his church, or sect, or customs, or opinions; and then this zeal must be the evidence of his piety. And so the inquisitors have thought they have religiously served God, by murdering his servants; and it is the badge of their honour to be the devil's hangmen, to execute his malice on the members of Christ; and all this is done in zeal for religion by irreligious hypocrites. There is no standing before the malicious zeal of a graceless Pharisee, when it riseth up for his carnal interest, or the honour, and traditions, and customs of his sect; (Luke vi. 7.) "And they were filled with madness, and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus;" Luke iv. 28. Acts v. 17. xiii. 45. John xvi. 2. Rom. x. 2. Phil. iii. 6. Acts xxvi. 10, 11. The zeal of a true Christian consumeth himself with grief to see the madness of the wicked; but the zeal of the hypocrite consumeth others, that by the light of the fire his religiousness may be seen. You may see the Christian's fervent love to God, by the fervent flames which he can suffer for his sake: and you may see the fervent love of the hypocrite, by the flames which he kindleth for others. By these he crieth with Jehu, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord;" 2 Kings x. 16. 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

LV. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that most highly esteemeth and regardeth the interest of God and men's salvation in the world, and taketh all things else to be inconsiderable in comparison of these. The interest of great men, and nobles, and commanders; yea, and his own in corporal respects, as riches, honour, health and life, he taketh to be things unworthy to be named, in competition with the interest of Christ and souls. The thing that his heart is most set upon in the world is, that God be glorified, and that the world acknowledge him their King, and that his laws be obeyed, and that darkness, infidelity and ungodliness may be cast out; and that pride and worldliness, and fleshly lusts, may not hurry the miserable world unto perdition. It

is one of the saddest and most amazing thoughts that ever entereth into his heart, to consider how much of the world is overwhelmed in ignorance and wickedness, and how great the kingdom of the devil is, in comparison with the kingdom of Christ; that God should forsake so much of his creation; that Christianity should not be owned in above the sixth part of the world; and popish pride and ignorance, with the corruptions of many other sects, and the worldly, carnal minds of hypocrites, should rob Christ of so much of this little part, and leave him so small a flock of holy ones, that must possess the kingdom. His soul consenteth to the method of the Lord's prayer, as prescribing us the order of our desires. And in his prayers he seeketh first, (in order of estimation and intention,) the hallowing of God's name, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; before his daily bread, or the pardon of his sins, or the deliverance of his soul from temptations and the evil one. Mark him in his prayers, and you shall find that he is above other men, taken up in earnest petitions for the conversion of the heathen and infidel world, and the undeceiving of Mahometans, Jews, and heretics, and the clearing of the church from those papal tyrannies, and fopperies and corruptions, which make Christianity hateful or contemptible, in the eyes of the heathen and Mahometan world, and hinder their conversion. No man so much lamenteth the pride and covetousness, and laziness and unfaithfulness of the pastors of the church: because of the doleful consequents to the Gospel and the souls of men, and yet with all possible honour to the sacred office, which they thus profane. No man so heartily lamenteth the contentions and divisions among Christians, and the doleful destruction of charity thereby. It grieveth him to see how much selfishness, pride, and malice, prevail with them that should shine as lights in a benighted world, and how obstinate and incurable they seem to be, against the plainest means, and humblest motions, for the church's edification and peace; Psal. cxx. 6, 7. cxxii. 6. Phil. ii. 1—4. Psal. cxix. 136. Zeph. iii. 18. Ezek. ix. 4. Psal. lxix. 9. John ii. 17. He envieth not kings and great men their dominions, wealth or pleasure; nor is he at all ambitious in their tremendous exaltation. But the thing that his heart is set upon is, "that the king-

doms of this world may all become the kingdoms of the Lord ; Rev. xi. 15 ; and that the Gospel may every where “ have free course and be glorified,” and the preachers of it be encouraged, or at least “ be delivered from unreasonable, wicked men ;” 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. Little careth he who is uppermost or conquereth in the world, or who goeth away with the preferments or riches of the earth (supposing that he fail not of his duty to his rulers) so that it may go well with the affairs of the Gospel, and souls be but helped in the way to heaven. Let God be honoured, and souls converted and edified, and he is satisfied. This is it that maketh the times good in his account ; he thinketh not as the proud and carnal church of Rome, that the times are best when the clergy are richest and greatest in the world, and overtop princes, and claim the secular power, and live in worldly pomp and pleasures ; but when holiness most aboundeth, and the members of Christ are likest to their head, and when multitudes of sincere believers are daily added to the church, and when the mercy and holiness of God shine forth in the numbers and purity of the saints. It is no riches or honour that can be heaped upon himself, or any others, that make the times seem good to him, if knowledge and godliness are discountenanced and hindered, and the way to heaven is made more difficult ; if atheism, infidelity, ungodliness, pride and malignity do prevail, and truth and sincerity are driven into the dark ; and when “ he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.” Psal. lix. 15. When “ the godly man ceaseth and the faithful fail from among the children of men ; when every man speaketh vanity to his neighbour, and the poor are oppressed, and the needy sigh, and the wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted.” Psal. xii. 1, 2. 5. 8. The times are good when the men are good ; and evil when the men are evil, be they never so great or prosperous. As Nehemiah, when he was cup-bearer to the king himself, yet wept and mourned for the desolations of Jerusalem ; Nehem. i. 3, 4. ii. 2, 3. Whoever prospereth, the times are ill when there is a “ famine of the word of the Lord, and when the chief of the priests and people do transgress and mock God’s messengers, and despise his word, and misuse his prophets ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. 16. Amos viii. 11, 12. When the apostles are “ charged to speak no more in the name of

Christ; Acts iv. 18, v. 40. It is a text enough to make one tremble, to think into what a desperate condition the Jews were carried by a partial, selfish zeal; "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." 1 Thess. ii. 15. 16. When the interest of themselves and their own nation and priesthood, did so far blind and pervert them, that they durst persecute the preachers of the Gospel, and "forbid them to speak to the people that they may be saved;" it was a sign that "wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." A Christian indeed had rather be without Jeroboam's kingdom, than 'make Israel to sin,' and 'make the basest of the people priests,' and 'stretch out his hand against the prophet of the Lord:' 1 Kings, xii. 30, 31. xiii. 4. He had rather labour with his hands, as Paul, and live in poverty and rags, so that the Gospel may be powerfully and plentifully preached, and holiness abound, than to live in all the prosperity of the world, with the hindrance of men's salvation. He had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than be a lord in the kingdom of satan. He cannot rise by the ruins of the church, nor feed upon those morsels that are the price of the blood of souls.

2. And the weakest Christian is in all this of the same mind, saving that private and selfish interest is not so fully overcome, nor so easily and resolutely denied; Luke xiv. 26. 33.

3. But here the hypocrite sheweth the falseness of his heart. His own interest is it that chooseth his religion; and that he may not torment himself, by being wicked in the open light, he maketh himself believe, that whatsoever is most for his own interest, is most pleasing unto God, and most for the good of souls and the interest of the Gospel; so that the carnal Romish clergy can persuade their consciences, that all the darkness and superstitious of their kingdom, and all the opposition of the light of the Gospel of Christ, do make for the honour of God and the good of souls; because they uphold their tyranny, wealth, and pomp, and pleasure. Or if they cannot persuade their consciences to believe so gross a lie, let church and souls speed how

they will, they will favour nothing that favoureth not their interest and ends. And the interest of the flesh and Spirit, and of the world and Christ, are so repugnant, that commonly such worldlings take the serious practice of godliness for the most hateful thing, and the serious practisers of it for the most insufferable persons; Acts vii. 57. xxi. 36. xxii. 22. xxiv. 5, 6. John xix. 15. The enmity of interests, with the enmity of nature, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, will maintain that warfare to the end of the world; in which the prince of the powers of darkness shall seem to prevail (as he did against our crucified Lord): but he shall be overcome by his own successes, and the just shall conquer by patience, when they seem most conquered. The name, and form, and image of religion, the carnal hypocrite doth not only bear, but favour, and himself accept; but the life and serious practice he abhorreth, as inconsistent with his worldly interest and ends. For these he can find in his heart, with Ahab, to hate and imprison Micaiah, and prefer his four hundred flattering prophets; 1 Kings xxii. 6. 8. 24. 27. If Luther will touch the pope's crown and the friars' bellies, they will not scruple to oppose and ruin, both him and all such preachers in the world, if they were able: John xi. 48, 50. Acts v. 28.

LVI. 1. A Christian indeed, is one whose holiness usually maketh him an eyesore to the ungodly world; and his charity and peaceableness, and moderation, maketh him to be censured as not strict enough, by the superstitious and dividing sects of Christians. For seeing the church hath suffered between these two sorts of opposers, ever since the suffering of Christ himself; it cannot be but the solid Christian offend them both, because he hath that which both dislike. All the ungodly hate him for his holiness, which is cross to their interest and way; and all the dividers will censure him for that universal charity and moderation, which is against their factious and destroying zeal (described, James iii). Even Christ himself was not strict enough (in superstitious observances) for the ceremonious, zealous Pharisees. He transgressed, with his disciples, the tradition of the elders, in neglecting their observances, who transgressed the commandment of God by their tradition; Matt. xv. 2, 3. He was not strict enough in their uncharitable observation of the sabbath-day; Matt. xii. 2. John, who was eminent

for fasting, they said, had a devil. "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' But wisdom is justified of her children;" Matt. xi. 18, 19. And the weak Christians; Rom. xiv. 1—3. did censure those that did eat those meats and do those things, which they conceived to be unlawful. They that err themselves, and make God a service which he never appointed, will censure all as lukewarm, or temporizers, or wide-conscienced men, that err not with them, and place not their religion in such superstitious observances, as "touch not, taste not, handle not," &c. Col. ii. 18. 21—23. And the raw, censorious Christians are offended with the charitable Christian, because he damneth not as many and as readily as they, and shutteth not enough out of the number of believers, and judgeth not rigorously enough of their ways. In a word, he is taken by one sort to be too strict, and by the other to be too compliant or indifferent in religion; because he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and days, and such like circumstances, but in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" Rom. xiv. 15—17. And as Paul withstood Peter to the face, for drawing men to make scruple or conscience of things lawful; Gal. ii. 11—13; so is the sound Christian withstood by the superstitious, for not making scruple of lawful things.

2. And the weak Christian is in the same case, so long as he followeth prudent, pious, charitable guides. But if he be taken in the snares of superstition, he pleaseth the superstitious party, though he displease the world.

3. And whereas the solid Christian will not stir an inch from truth and duty, to escape either the hatred of the wicked, or the bitterest censures of the sectary, or the weak; the hypocrite must needs have one party on his side: for if both condemn him, and neither applaud him, he loseth his peculiar reward: Matt. vi. 2. 5. xxiii. 5—8.

LVII. 1. The confirmed Christian doth understand the necessity of a faithful ministry, for the safety of the weak, (as well as the conversion of the wicked) and for the preservation of the interest of religion upon earth! And therefore no personal unworthiness of ministers, nor any calumnies of enemies can make him think or speak dishonourably of that sacred office. But he reverenceth it as instituted

by Christ ; and though he loathe the sottishness and wickedness of those that run before they are sent, and are utterly insufficient or ungodly, and take it up for a living or trade only, as they would a common work ; and are “ sons of Belial, that know not the Lord, and cause the offering of the Lord to be abhorred ;” 1 Sam. ii. 2. 17. Yet no such temptation shall overthrow his reverence to the office, which is the ordinance of Christ ; much less will he be unthankful to those who are able and faithful in their office, and labour instantly for the good of souls, as willing to spend and be spent for their salvation. When the world abuseth and derideth, and injureth them, he is one that honoureth them both for their work and master’s sake, and the experience which he hath had of the blessing of God on their labours to himself. For he knoweth that the smiting of the shepherds, is but the devil’s ancient way for the scattering of the flock ; though he knoweth that “ if the salt hath lost its savour, it is good for nothing, neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill ; but men cast it out, and it is trodden under foot ; (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear) ;” Luke xiv. 34, 35. Matt. v. 13, 14. Yet he also knoweth, that he “ that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward ;” Matt. x. 41, 42. And that, “ he that receiveth them, receiveth Christ, and he that despiseth them (that are sent by him) despiseth him ;” Luke x. 16. He therefore readily obeyeth those commands, Heb. xiii. 17. “ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls as those that must give an account ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. We beseech you brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works’ sake, and be at peace among yourselves ; 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour ; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

2. But though the weak Christian be of the same mind so far as he is sanctified, yet is he much more easily tempted into a wrangling censoriousness against his teachers, though they be never so able and holy men ; and by seducers may be drawn to oppose them, or speak contemptuously of them, as the Galatians did of Paul, and some of the Corinthians ; accounting him as their enemy for telling them the truth

when lately they would have plucked out their eyes to do him good ; Gal. iv. 15, 16.

3. But the hypocrite is most easily engaged against them, either when they grate upon the guilt of his former sin, or open his hypocrisy, or plainly cross him in his carnal interest, or else when his pride hath conquered his sobriety, and engaged him in some sect or erroneous way, which his teachers are against, and would reduce him from ; John vi. 66. Mark v. 27. 2 Chron. xxv. 16.

LVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that hath stored up such manifold experience of the fulfilling of God's promises, and the hearing of prayers, and the goodness of his holy ways, as will greatly fortify him against all temptations to infidelity, apostasy, or distrust. No one hath stronger temptations usually than he, and no one is so well furnished with weapons to resist them. The arguments of most others are fetched out of their books only ; but he hath moreover a life of experience to confirm his faith, and so hath the witness in himself. He hath tried and found that in God, in holiness, in faith, in prayer, which will never suffer him to forsake them. Yea, it is like that he hath upon record some such wonders in the answer of prayers, as might do much to silence an infidel himself. I am sure many Christians have had such strange appearances of the extraordinary hand of God, that hath done much to destroy the remnants of their own unbelief ; Psal. lxvi. 16.

2. But the experiences of the younger, weaker Christians are much shorter, and less serviceable to their faith ; and they have not judgment enough to understand and make use of the dealings of God ; but are ready to plead his providences unto evil ends and consequences, and to take their own passionate imaginations for the workings of the Spirit. It is ordinary with them to say, ' this or that was set upon my heart, or spoken to me,' as if it had been some divine inspiration, when it was nothing but the troubled workings of a weak distempered brain : and it is their own fancy and heart that saith that to them, which they think the Spirit of God within them said ; Heb. v. 11—13. 2 Thess. ii. 21. John iv. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 1 Cor. xii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. 32. xxix. 8.

3. And the hypocrite wanteth those establishing experiments of the power of the Gospel, and the hearing of pray-

ers, and fulfilling of promises, and communion with Christ in the Spirit; and therefore he is the more open to the power of temptations, and a subtle disputer will easily corrupt him and carry him away to flat apostasy; for he wanteth the root and witness in himself; Matt. xiii. 21, 22. 1 John v. 10. Heb. vi. 6, 7, 8. Luke viii. 13.

LIX. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that highly valueth sanctified affections and passions, that all he doth may be done as lively as possibly he can; and also holy abilities for expression. But he much more valueth, the three great essential, constant parts of the new creature within him; that is, 1. A high estimation of God, and Christ, and heaven and holiness in his understanding, above all that can be set in any competition. 2. A resolved choice and adhesion of the will, by which he preferreth God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, above all that can be set against them, and is fixedly resolved here to place his happiness and his hopes. 3. The main drift and endeavours of his life, in which he "seeketh first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; Matt. vi. 33. ix. 20, 21. In these three (his highest estimation, his resolved choice and complacencies, and his chief endeavours) he taketh his standing constant evidences of his sincerity to consist; and by these he trieth himself as to his state, and not by the passionate feelings or affections of his heart; nor by his memory, or gifts, or orderly thinking, or expression. And it is these rational operations of his soul, in which he knoweth that holiness doth principally consist; and therefore he most laboureth to be strong in these. 1. To ground his judgment well. 2. And to resolve and fix his will. 3. And to order his conversation aright; Psal. i. 23. Yet highly valuing sensible affections and gifts of utterance, but in subserviency to those which are the vital acts; 1 Cor. xiii. Rom. vii. 18, &c. vi. 16. 22. Rom. viii. 13. James ii. Col. i. 9. iii. 16.

2. But the weak Christian usually placeth most of his religion in the more affectionate and expressive part: he striveth more with his heart for passionate apprehensions, than for complacency and fixed resolution. He is often in doubt of his sincerity, when he wanteth the feeling affectionate workings which he desireth, &c. thinketh he hath no more grace than that he hath sensibility of expressive gifts; and so as he buildeth his comfort upon these inconstant

signs, his comforts are accordingly inconstant. Sometimes he thinketh he hath grace, when his body or other advantages do help the excitation of his lively affections : and when the dulness of his body, or other impediments hinder this, he questioneth his grace again, because he undersandeth not aright the nature and chiefest acts of grace.

3. The hypocrite hath neither the rational nor the passionate part in sincerity : but he may go much further in the latter than the former. A quick and passionate nature though unsanctified, may be brought to shed more tears, and express more fervour than many a holy person can : especially upon the excitation of some quickening sermons, or some sharp affliction, or great conviction, or at the approach of death. Few of the most holy persons can constantly retain so lively, fervent, passionate repentings, and desires and resolutions to amend, as some carnal persons have in sickness. The power of fear alone doth make them more earnest, than love maketh many a gracious soul ; but when the fear is over, they are the same again. How oft have I heard a sick man most vehemently profess his resolutions for a holy life, which all have come to nothing afterward ? How oft have I heard a common drunkard, with tears, cry out against himself for his sin, and yet go on in it ? And how many gracious persons have I known whose judgments and wills have been groundedly resolved for God and holiness, and their lives have been holy, fruitful, and obedient, who yet could not shed a tear for sin, nor feel any very great sorrows or joys ? If you judge of a man by his earnestness in some good moods, and not by the constant tenor of his life, you will think many a hypocrite to be better than most saints. Who would have thought, that had seen him only in that fit, but that Saul had been a penitent man, when he lift up his voice and wept, and said to David, “Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good ; whereas I have rewarded thee evil ; 1 Sam. xxiv. 16—21. A smaller matter will raise some sudden passions, than will renew the soul, and give the preeminence to God, and holiness and heaven, in the judgment, will and conversation ; Hosea vi. 4. xiii. 3. Isaiah lviii. 2. Matt. xiii. 20.

LX. A Christian indeed, confirmed in grace, is one that maketh it the business of his life to prepare for death ; and

delayeth not his serious thoughts of it, and preparations for it till it surprise him; and therefore when it cometh it findeth him prepared, and he gladly entertaineth it as the messenger of his father, to call him to his everlasting home. It is not a strange unexpected thing to him, to hear he must die; he died daily in his daily sufferings, and mortified contempt of worldly things, and in his daily expectation of his change. He wondereth to see men at a dying time, surprised with astonishment and terror, who jovially or carelessly neglected it before, as if they had never known till then that they must die. Or as if a few years time were reason enough for so great a difference. For that which he certainly knoweth will be, he looketh at as if it were even at hand; and his preparation for it is more serious in his health, than other men's is on their deathbed. He useth more carefully to bethink himself what graces he shall need at a dying time, and in what case he shall then wish his soul to be; and accordingly he laboureth in his provisions now, even as if it were to be to-morrow. He verily believeth that it is incomparably "better for him to be with Christ," than to abide on earth; and therefore, though death of itself be an enemy, and terrible to nature, yet being the only passage into happiness, he gladly entertaineth it. Though he have not himself any clear apprehensions, of the place and state of the happiness of departed souls, yet it quieteth him to know that they "shall be with Christ," and that Christ knoweth all, and prepareth and secureth for him that promised rest; John xii. 26. 2 Cor. v. 1. 7, 8. Phil. i. 21. 23. Luke xxiii. 43. Though he is not free from all the natural fears of death, yet his belief and hope of endless happiness doth abate those fears by the joyful expectation of the gain which followeth. See my book, called "The Last Enemy, and the Last Work of a Believer;" and that of "Self-denial," against the fears of death.

But especially he loveth and longeth for the coming of Christ to judgment, as knowing that the marriage-day of the Lamb is come, and then the desires and hopes of all believers shall be satisfied; "then shall the righteous shine as stars in the kingdom of their Father:" and the hand of violence shall not reach them. Every enemy then is overcome, and all the Redeemer's work is consummated, and the kingdom delivered up unto the Father. Then shall the ungodly

and the unmerciful be confounded, and the righteous filled with everlasting joy, when the Lord shall thoroughly plead their cause, and justify them against the accusations of satan, and all the lies of his malicious instruments. O blessed, glorious, joyful day, when Christ shall come with thousands of his angels, "to execute vengeance on the ungodly world, and to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" 2 Thess. i. 8—10. When the patient followers of the Lamb shall behold him in glory, whom they have believed in, and shall see that they did not pray, or hope, or wait in vain! When Christ himself and his sacred truth, shall be justified and glorified in the presence of the world, and his enemies' mouths for ever stopped. "When he shall convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him;" Jude 14, 15. Where then is the mouth that pleadeth the cause of infidelity and impiety? and reproached the serious holiness of believers? and made a jest of the judgments of the Lord? Then what terrors and confusion, and shame, what fruitless repentings will seize upon that man, that set himself against the holy ones of the Lord, and knew not the day of his visitation, and embraced the image and form of godliness, while he abhorred the power. The joys which will then possess the hearts of the justified, will be such as now no heart can comprehend. When love shall come to be glorified in the highest expression, to those that lately were so low; when all their doubts, and fears, and sorrows, shall be turned into full contenting sight, and all tears shall be wiped away, and all reproaches turned into glory, and every enemy overcome, and sin destroyed, and holiness effected, and our "vile bodies changed, and made like the glorious body of Christ; Phil. iii. 20, 21. Col. iii. 3, 4. Then will the love and work of our redemption be fully understood. And then a saint will be a saint indeed, when with Christ they shall "judge the angels and the world:" 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3: and shall hear from Christ, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" Matt. xxv. 34. "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord;" Matt. xxv. 21. Then "every knee shall bow to Christ, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" Phil. ii.

2. 10, 11. Then sin will fully appear in its malignity, and holiness in its lustre unto all. The proud will then be abased, and the mouths of all the wicked stopped ; when they shall see, to their confusion, the glory of that Christ whom they despised, and of those holy ones whom they made their scorn. In vain will they then “ knock when the door is shut, and cry, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; ” Matt. xxv. 10—12. And in vain will they then wish, ‘ O that we had known the day of our visitation, that we might have died the death of the righteous, and our latter end might have been as his ; ’ Numb. xxii. 10. Rom. iii. 19. Job v. 16. Psal. cvii. 42. xxxi. 23. xiii. 6. 8.

The day of death is to true believers a day of happiness and joy ; but it is much easier for them to think with joy on the coming of Christ, and the day of judgment, because it is a day of fuller joy, and soul and body shall be conjoined in the blessedness ; and there is nothing in it to be so great a stop to our desires as death is, which naturally is an enemy. God hath put a love of life, and fear of death, into the nature of every sensible creature, as necessary for the preservation of themselves and others, and the orderly government of the world. But what is there in the blessed day of judgment, which a justified child of God should be averse to ? O, if he were but sure that this would be the day, or week, or year of the coming of his Lord, how glad would the confirmed Christian be ! And with what longings would he be looking up, to see that most desired sight.

2. And the weak Christian is so far of the same mind, that he had rather come to God by death and judgment, than not at all ; (except when temptations make him fear that he shall be condemned.) He hath fixedly made choice of that felicity, which till then he cannot attain. He would not take all the pleasures of this world for his hopes of the happiness of that day : but yet he thinketh not of it with so strong a faith and great consolation, nor with such boldness and desire, as the confirmed Christian doth ; but either with much more dull security, or more perplexity and fear. His thoughts of God and of the world to come, are much more dark and doubtful, and his fears of that day are usually so great, as to make his desires and joys scarcely felt : only he thinketh not of it with that contempt or stupidity as the

infidel or hardened sinner, nor with the terrors of those that have no God, no Christ, no hope ; (except when temptation bringeth him near to the borders of despair.) His death indeed is unspeakably safer than the death of the ungodly, and the joys which he is entering into will quickly end the terror ; but yet he hath no great comfort at the present, but only so much trust in Christ, as keepeth his heart from sinking into despair.

3. But to the hypocrite or seeming Christian, death and judgment are the most unwelcome days, and the thoughts of them are the most unwelcome thoughts. He would take any tolerable life on earth, at any time, for all his hopes of heaven ; and that not only through the doubts of his own sincerity, (which may sometimes be the case of a tempted Christian,) but through the unsoundness of his belief of the life to come, or the utter unsuitableness of his soul to such a blessedness ; which maketh him look at it as less desirable to him, than a life of fleshly pleasures here. All that he doth for heaven is upon mere necessity, because he knoweth that die he must, and he had rather be in heaven than in hell, though he had rather be in prosperity on earth than either. And as he taketh heaven but as a reserve or second good, so he seeketh it with reserves, and in the second place. And having no better preparations for death and judgment, no marvel if they be his greatest terror. He may possibly by his self-deceit have some abatement of his fears, and he may by pride and wit seem very valiant and comfortable at his death, to hide his fear and pusillanimity from the world. But the cure of all his misery is, that he sought not first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and laid not up a treasure upon heaven, but upon earth, and loved this world above God, and above the world to come ; and so his heart is not set on heaven, nor his affections on things above ; and therefore he hath not that love to God, to Christ, to saints, to perfect holiness, which should make that world most desirable in his eyes, and make him think unfeignedly that it is best for him to depart and live with Christ for ever. Having not the Divine nature, nor having lived the Divine life in walking with God, his complacency and desires are carnal, according to the nature which he hath. And this is the true cause, (and not only his doubts of his own sincerity,)

of his unwillingness to die, or to see the day of Christ's appearance; Matt. vi. 33. 19—21. 1 John ii. 15. Col. iii. 1—4. Rom. viii. 5—8. 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. 2 Pet. i. 4.

And thus I have shewed you from the word of God, and the nature of Christianity, the true characters of the Confirmed Christian, and of the Weak Christian, and of the Seeming Christian.

The Uses for which I have drawn up these characters, and which the reader is to make of them, are these :

1. Here the weak Christian and the hypocrite may see what manner of persons they ought to be. Not only how unsafe it is to remain in a state of hypocrisy, but also how uncomfortable, and unserviceable, and troublesome it is, to remain in a state of weakness and diseasedness; what a folly (and indeed a sign of hypocrisy) is it to think, 'If I had but grace enough to save me, I would desire no more, or I would be well content.' Are you content, if you have but life here, to difference you from the dead? If you were continually infants that must be fed, and carried, and made clean by others; or if you had a continual gout, or stone, or leprosy, and lived in continual want and misery, you would think that life alone is not enough; and that '*non vivere tantum sed valere vita est*;' that life is uncomfortable when we have nothing but life, and all the delights of life are gone. He that lieth in continual pain and want is weary of his life, if he cannot separate it from those calamities. He that knoweth how necessary strength is, as well as life, to do any considerable service for God, and how many pains attend the diseases and infirmities of the weak, and what great dishonour cometh to Christ and religion, by the faults and childishness of many that shall be pardoned and saved, would certainly bestir him with all possible care to get out of this sick or infant state.

2. By this you may see who are the strong Christians, and who are the weak. It is not always the man of learning and free expressions, that can speak longest and most wisely of holy things, that is the strong, confirmed Christian; but he that most excelleth in the love of God and man, and in a heavenly mind, and holy life. Nor is it he that is unlearned, or of a weak memory, or slow expression, that is the weakest Christian; but he that hath least love to God and

man, and the most love to his carnal self, and to the world, and the strongest corruptions, and the weakest grace. Many a poor day-labourer, or woman, that can scarce speak sense, is a stronger Christian (as being strong in faith, and love, and patience, and humility, and mortification, and self-denial) than many great preachers and doctors of the church.

3. You see here what kind of men they be that we call the godly; and what that godliness is which we plead for, against the malicious serpentine generation. The liars would make men believe that by godliness we mean a few affected strains, or hypocritical shews, or heartless lip-service, or singular opinions, in needless scrupulosity, or ignorant zeal; yea, a schism, or faction, or sedition, or rebellion, or what the devil please to say. If these sixty characters describe any such thing, then I will not deny, that in the way that such men call heresy, faction, schism, singularity, so worship we the God of our fathers. But if not, the Lord rebuke thee satan, and hasten the day when the "lying lips shall be put to silence;" Psal. cxxxi. 18. cxx. 2. cix. 2. Prov. xii. 19. 22. x. 18.

4. By this also you may see how inexcusable the enemies of Christianity and godliness are, and for what it is that they hate and injure it. Is there any thing in all this character of a Christian, that deserveth the suspicion or hatred of the world? What harm is there in it? Or what will it do against them? I may say to them of his servants as Christ did of himself: "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" John x. 32. Many heavenly graces are in the sanctified believer: for which of these do you hate and injure him? I know that goodness is so far in credit with human nature, that you will answer as the Jews did: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy;" ver. 33. We hate them not for godliness, but for hypocrisy and sin. But if it be so indeed, 1. Speak not against godliness itself, nor against the strictest performance of our duty. 2. Yea, plead for godliness, and countenance and promote it, while you speak against hypocrisy and sin. 3. And choose out the hypocrite whose character is here set before you; and let him be the object of your enmity and distaste. Let it fall on those that are worldlings and time-servers, and will

stretch their consciences to their carnal interest, and can do any thing to save their skin; and being false to Christ, can hardly be true to any of their superiors, but only in subordination to themselves. As it is said of Constantius, that he commanded that all his servants should be turned out of their places that would not renounce Christianity. And when he had thereby tried them, he turned out all the apostates, and kept in the sincere, and told them, they could not be true to him, that were not true to their God and Saviour.

4. And see that you be not hypocrites yourselves. You profess yourselves Christians; and what is it to be a Christian indeed, you may here perceive. If any that fall under the character of hypocrites, or worse, shall vilify or hate the sincere Christians as hypocrites, what a horrid aggravation of their hypocrisy will it be?

Indeed it is the best and strongest Christians that have most of the hatred both of the unbelieving and the hypocritical world. And for my own part I must confess, that the very observation of the universal implacable enmity, which is undeniably seen throughout the world, between the woman's and the serpent's seed (being such as is not found among any other sorts of men on other occasions), doth not a little confirm my belief of the holy Scriptures, and seemeth to be an argument not well to be answered by any enemy of the Christian cause. That it should begin between the two first brothers that ever were born in the world, and stop in nothing lower than shedding the righteous blood of Abel, for no other cause, but because the works of Cain were evil, and his brother's righteous; 1 John iii. 12, 13. And that it should go down to the prophets, and Christ, and the apostles, and primitive saints, and continue to this day throughout the earth; and that the profession of the same religion doth not alter it, but rather enrage the enmity of hypocrites against all that are serious and sincere in the religion which they themselves profess. These are things that no good account can be given of, save only from the predictions and verities of the word of God.

5. Also you may hence perceive how exceedingly injurious hypocrites and scandalous Christians, are to the name of Christ, and cause of Christianity and godliness in the world. The blind, malicious enemies of faith and godliness, instead of judging them by the sacred rule, do look only to

the professors, and think of religion as they think of them. If they see the professors of Christianity to be covetous, proud, usurpers, time-servers, self-exalters, cruel, schismatical, rebellious, they presently charge all this upon their religion; and godliness must bear the blame, when all comes but for want of godliness and religion. And all the world hath not done so much against these and all other sins, as Christ hath done. What if Christ's disciples strive who shall be the greatest, is it long of him who girdeth himself to wash and wipe their feet? and telleth them, that "except they be converted, and become as little children, they shall not enter into the kingdom of God?" Matt. xviii. 3. and telleth them, that though "the kings of the Gentiles do exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, yet ye shall not be so?" Luke xxii. 25, 26. Is it long of him that hath said to the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock?" Who hath set the elders such a lesson as you find in Acts xx. 2 Tim. iv. 1—3. 1 Tim. v. 17. If any called Christians should be truly schismatical, factious, or turbulent, is it long of him that hath prayed the Father that they may all be one? John xvii. 21—23. and hath so vehemently entreated them "that they speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, and that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;" 1 Cor. vii. 10. and hath charged them to "mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid them?" Rom. xvi. 16, 17. If any called Christians shall be seditious, or rebellious, or as the Papists believe, that the clergy are from under the jurisdiction of kings, and that the pope hath power to excommunicate princes, and absolve their subjects from their allegiance, and give their dominions to others, as it is decreed in the general council at the Lateran under Innocent the Third, Can. 3. Is all this long of Christ, who hath paid tribute to Cæsar, and hath commanded that every soul be subject to the higher powers, and not resist, and this for conscience sake? Rom. xiii. 1—3. and hath bid his disciples rather to turn the other cheek, than to seek revenge? Luke vi. 29.

and hath told them that they that use the sword (of rebellion, or revenge, or cruelty) shall perish by the sword? John xviii. 11. If any Christians will, under pretence of religion, set up a cruel inquisition, or kill men to convert them, or become self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false-accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, &c. Is this long of him that hath forbid all this? 2 Tim. iii. 2—5. If for their own domination, lust, or covetousness, men called Christians, will be worse than heathens and wolves to one another, is this long of him that hath made it his sheep-mark, by which we must be known to all men to be his disciples, that “we love one another?” John xiii. 35. and hath told them, that if they “bite and devour one another, they shall be devoured one of another?” (Gal. v. 15.) and hath blessed the merciful, as those that shall find mercy (Matt. v. 7.), and hath told men that what they do to his little ones, shall be taken as if it were done to himself (Matt. xxv.), and hath commanded the “strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves” (Rom. xv. 1—3.), and “to receive one another as Christ received us” (ver. 7.), and hath told those that offend but “one of his little ones,” that it “were good for that man that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. xviii. 6.), and hath told him that “smiteth his fellow servants, that his Lord will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;” chap. xxiv. 48—51. I wonder what men would have Christ do, to free himself and the Christian religion from the imputation of the sins of the hypocrites, and the weak distempered Christians. Would they have him yet make stricter laws (when they hate these for being so strict already), or would they have him condemn sinners to more grievous punishment, when they are already offended at the severity of his threatenings? O what an unrighteous generation are his enemies that blame the law, because men break it, and blame religion, because many are not religious enough. As if the sun must be hated, because that shadows and dungeons do want light; or life and health must be hated, because many are sick and pain-

ed by their diseases ! But Christ will shortly stop all the mouths of these unreasonable men ; and O how easily will he justify himself, his laws, and all his holy ways, when all iniquity shall be for ever silent. And though “ it must needs be that offences come, yet woe to the world because of offences, and woe to the man by whom they come.”

The wrong that Christ receiveth from hypocrites and scandalous Christians (of all ranks and places) is not to be estimated. These are the causes that Christianity and godliness are so contemptible in the eyes of the world ! that Jews, and heathens, and Mahometans, are still unconverted and deriders of the faith ; because they see such scandalous tyranny and worship among the Papists, and such scandalous lives among the greatest part of professed Christians in the world ; whereas, if the papal tyranny were turned into the Christian ministry (Luke xxii. 25—27. 1 Tim. v. 17.), and their irrational fopperies, and historical, hypocritical worship were changed into a reverent, rational, and spiritual worship ; and the cruel, carnal, worldly lives of men called Christians, were changed into self-denial, love, and holiness. In a word, if Christians were Christians indeed, and such as I have here described from their rule, what a powerful means would it be of the conversion of all the unbelieving world ? Christianity would then be in the eye of the world, as the sun in its brightness, and the glory of it would dazzle the eyes of the beholders, and draw in millions to inquire after Christ, who are now driven from him by the sins of hypocrites and scandalous believers.

And this doth not contradict what I said before of the enmity of the world to holiness, and that the best are most abused by the ungodly. For even this enmity must be rationally cured, as by the error of reason it is fed. God useth by the power of intellectual light, to bring all those out of darkness whom he saveth, and so bringeth them from the power of satan to himself ; Acts xxvi. 18. Men hate not holiness as good, but as misconceived to be evil. Evil, I say, to them, because it is opposite to their sensual pleasures, which they take to be their chiefest good. And the way of curing their enmity, is by shewing them their error ; and that is, by shewing them the excellency and necessity of that which they unreasonably distaste ; Acts xxvi. 9—11. 14. 19. Luke xv. 13—16. Acts ii. 36, 37.

6. Lastly, in these characters you have some help in the work of self-examination, for the trial both of the truth and strength of grace. I suppose it will be objected, that in other treatises I have reduced all the infallible marks of grace to a smaller number. To which I answer, I still say, that the predominancy or prevalency of the interest of God as our God, and Christ as our Saviour, and the Spirit as our Sanctifier, in the estimation of the understanding, the resolved choice of the will, and the government of the life, against all the worldly interest of the flesh, is the only infallible sign of a justified, regenerate soul. But this whole hath many parts, and it is abundance of particulars materially in which this sincerity is to be found. Even all the sixty characters which I have here named, are animated by that one, and contained in it. And I think to the most the full description of a Christian in his essential and integral parts (yet shewing which are indeed essential) is the best way to acquaint them with the nature of Christianity, and to help them in the trial of themselves. And as it were an abuse of human nature, for a painter to draw the picture of a man without arms, or legs, or nose, or eyes, because he may be a man without them; so would it have been in me to draw only a maimed picture of a Christian, because a maimed Christian is a Christian. Yet, because there are so many maimed Christians in the world, I have also shewed you their lamentable defects: not in a manner which tendeth to encourage them in their sins and wants under pretence of comforting them, but in that manner which may best excite them to their duty, in order to their recovery, without destroying their necessary supporting comforts.

O happy church, and state, and family, which are composed of such confirmed Christians! where the predominant temperature is such as I have here described! Yea, happy is the place where magistrates and ministers are such; who are the vital parts of state and church, and the instruments appointed to communicate these perfections to the rest. But how much more happy is the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, where the perfected spirits of the just in perfect light, and life, and love, are perfectly beholding, and admiring, and praising, and pleasing the eternal God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier for ever! Where the least and meanest is greater and more perfect than the confirmed

Christian here described; and where hypocrisy is utterly excluded, and imperfection ceaseth, with scandal, censures, uncharitableness, division, and all its other sad effects; and where the souls that thirsted after righteousness shall be fully satisfied, and love God more than they can now desire, and never grieve themselves or others with their wants or weaknesses, or misdoings any more. And, O blessed day, when our blessed Head shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe; whose weakness here occasioned his dishonour, and their own contempt! When the seed of grace is grown up into glory, and all the world, whether they will or not, shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; between the clean and the unclean, and between him that sweareth, and him that fear-eth an oath. And though now "our life is hid with Christ in God," and it yet "appeareth not (to the sight of ourselves or others) what we shall be; yet then when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory;" Heb. xii. 22, 23. Rev. xxii. 3—5. 14, 15. xxi. 3, 4. 8. 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. Matt. v. 4. 6. Mal. iii. 18. Eccles. ix. 2. 1 John iii. 2, 3. Col. iii. 3, 4. Away then my soul from this dark, deceitful, and vexatious world! Love not thy diseases, thy fetters and calamities. Groan daily to thy Lord, and earnestly groan to be cloathed upon with thy house that is from heaven (2 Cor. v. 2. 4.), that mortality may be swallowed up of life! Join in the harmonious desires of the creatures, who groan to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; Rom. viii. 20—22. "Abide in him, and walk in righteousness, that when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming;" 1 John iii. 28, 29. Join not with the evil servants, who say in their hearts, "Our Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to smite their fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; whose Lord shall come in a day when they look not for him, and in an hour that they are not aware of, and shall cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" Matt. xxiv. 38—51. O watch and pray that thou enter not into temptation! and be patient, for the Judge is at the door! Lift up thy head

with earnest expectation, O my soul, for thy redemption draweth near! Rejoice in hope before thy Lord, for he cometh; he cometh to judge the world in righteousness and truth. Behold he cometh quickly, though faith be failing, and iniquity abound, and love waxeth cold, and scorners say, 'Where is the promise of his coming!' Make haste O thou whom my soul desireth, and come in glory as thou first camest in humility, and conform them to thyself in glory, whom thou madest conformable to thy sufferings and humility! Let the holy city New Jerusalem be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and let God's tabernacle be with men, that he may dwell with them and be their God, and wipe away their tears, and death, and sorrow, and crying; and pain may be no more, but former things may pass away! Keep up our faith, our hope, our love! and daily vouchsafe us some beams of thy directing, consolatory light in this our darkness! and be not as a stranger to thy scattered flock, in this desolate wilderness! But let them hear thy voice, and find thy presence, and have such conversation with thee in heaven, in the exercise of faith and hope, and love, which is agreeable to their low and distant state. Testify to their souls that thou art their Saviour and Head, and that they abide in thee by the Spirit which thou hast given them, abiding, and overcoming in them, and as thy agent preparing them for eternal life. O let not our darkness, nor any strangeness feed our odious unbelief! O shew thyself more clearly to thy redeemed ones! And come and dwell in our hearts by faith! And by holy love, let us dwell in God, and God in us, that we grope not after him, as those that worship an unknown God. O save us from temptation! And if the messenger of satan be sent to buffet us, let thy strength be manifest in our weakness, and thy grace appear sufficient for us. And give us the patience which thou tellest us we need, that having done thy will, we may inherit the promise. And bring us to the sight and fruition of our Creator, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

END OF THE CHARACTER OF A SOUND, CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN.

GOD'S GOODNESS

VINDICATED;

FOR THE

HELP OF SUCH (ESPECIALLY IN MELANCHOLY) AS ARE TEMPTED
TO DENY IT, AND THINK HIM TO BE CRUEL, BECAUSE OF
THE PRESENT AND FUTURE MISERY OF MANKIND;
WITH RESPECT TO THE DOCTRINE OF RE-
PROBATION AND DAMNATION.

THE

PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

How much the glory of God and the salvation of men is concerned in the right understanding of his goodness, in all his ways and counsels towards them, is evidently seen by all that have any true notion of the Divine Excellency and man's felicity. God's goodness is his most solemnly proclaimed name and glory. It is his goodness duly known, that leads sinners to repentance, and unites their hearts to fear his name, and excites, and for ever terminates that love which is our holiness and happiness to eternity. It is also too well known, how much this amiable Divine Goodness is denied or doubted of. What cavils are raised against it by men of corrupt minds! What secret prejudice lies against it, and how deeply rooted in our depraved nature! Yea, with how fearful suggestions and apprehensions are some godly Christians (especially those that lie in the darkness of melancholy) sometimes perplexed about it! And even such as are grounded and settled in it, are liable to be assaulted, and may sometimes stagger and stumble at it. And indeed, though the kindness of God towards men hath appeared in the world, as visible as the sun in the firmament; yet man's darkened understanding, and his connate sensuality and selfishness, taking occasion from the more mysterious parts of providence, and those especially that most contradict the wisdom and interest of the flesh, hath

caused disputes, and raised doubts, against the truth of that which is in itself as clear and sure as that there is a God or a world, or any thing existent. Whereupon this author was earnestly desired by a friend, to collect some principles in a narrow compass, that might silence cavillers, succour the tempted, and confirm the sound mind. And for these ends they are, with his permission, by his friend made public; Hosea xiv. 9. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein."

April 27, 1671.

GOD'S GOODNESS

VINDICATED.

To help all such persons out of the snare of this dangerous and troublesome temptation, as are described in the propounded case, we must have respect, I. To the special case of the melancholy, who are more liable than others to such disturbances. II. To the common cause of their trouble and perplexity, as it consisteth in such opinions as you describe.

I. With the melancholy, the greatest difficulty lieth in making them capable to receive plain truths: for it will work, not as it is, but as it is received. And melancholy doth breed and feed such kind of thoughts, as naturally as a dead carcase feedeth vermin. Of forty or fifty melancholy persons that I have to deal with, there are scarce four that are not hurried with suggestions to blasphemous thoughts against God and the sacred Scriptures; and scarce two that are not under dismal apprehensions that they are miserable, undone creatures, (except only some that are all carried to conceits of prophecies, revelations, and some rare, exalting communications of light unto themselves.) This unhappy disease of melancholy is first seated in the organs of imagination and passion both; that is, in the spirits, and thereby in the very imagining faculty itself: though the natural parts being without pain or sickness, they will not believe that it is a disease at all. It inclineth them usually to

solitariness, to musing, and to dismal thoughts, that they are undone, graceless, hopeless, &c., which because they passionately seem to feel, no words, which silence them, will satisfy them; or if you seem a little to satisfy them to-day, it is all gone to-morrow: for a melancholy man is like the eye that looketh on all things through a coloured glass, or in an opthalmie, and seeth them according to the medium.

The disease, in some few, beginneth with over-stretching thoughts and troubles about things spiritual; but in most that I have met with, (ten to one,) it beginneth with some worldly cross, loss, or trouble, which grieveth them, and casteth them into troublesome anxieties and cares; and then when by these the spirits are diseased, it presently turneth upon conscience; first, against themselves, aggravating sin and misery, apprehending calamity from every thing which they see, hear, or think of; and next, against God and Scripture, perplexed in every thing that cometh before them, and quarrelling with all, and offended in all; and usually they are importuned, as if it were by something else within them, to say some blasphemous word against God, or do some mischief against themselves. No doubt through satan's special instigation, who can work on men according to the advantage of their bodily and sensitive distempers, and can do that on a melancholy man, (though a godly man,) which he cannot do on another; as he can also work on the choleric, phlegmatic, &c. according to their temper.

1. The cure of this must be by these means; (1.) You must not suffer them to be much alone. (2.) You must divert them from all musing, and turn it to discourse. (3.) You must keep from them displeasing things and persons, and help them to suitable pleasing company and converse. (4.) You must change their air and company sometimes, that strange objects may change their imagination. (5.) Above all, if they have strength, you must not suffer them to be idle, to lie in bed longer than they sleep in the day; nor to sit musing, but must get them upon the work of a lawful calling, and drive them on to so much diligence, that body and mind may be closely employed. This will be more than all other ordinary means. (6.) In most, meet physic also will do very much, which must be ordered by an experienced physician that is with them, or well knoweth them. (7.)

Lastly, Their false thoughts also must be confuted, and their minds have due satisfaction. And if you cannot have all, or most of these done, you can hardly expect a cure, unless time wear it off, which is doubtful.

II. The falsehood and vexation of such men's thoughts, whether the melancholy or others, are brought to pass, 1. By a false method of reasoning. II. By false opinions which they have before received.

1. It is a grossly deluding and subverting way of reasoning, to begin at dark and doubtful consequents, thence to argue against certain, clear, fundamental principles. As if from some doubts about the position and motion of the stars, or of the nature of light, heat, and motion, men should argue that there is no sun, or moon, or stars at all; or that they have no power of light, heat, or motion: or as if from the many difficulties in anatomy, about the circulation of the blood the 'oleum nervosum,' the 'lymphæ,' and its vessels, the passages and the 'succus' of the pancreas and gall, the transcolation through the intestines into the 'venæ lactæ,' the chyly glandules, and such like, one should arise to a conclusion, that there is no blood, no chyle, no veins, no glandules, no head, no body; or from the controversy, whether the heart be a mere muscle without any proper 'parenchymæ,' one should grow to conclude that there is no heart: so such persons, from points beyond man's reach, about God's decrees and intentions, and the mysteries of providence, conclude or doubt against God's goodness; that is, whether indeed there be a God. I have spoken so fully to this case, in my "Reasons of the Christian Religion," chapter iv. that I would desire you to peruse it. I shall now only give you twenty questions which the tempted person may challenge all the subtlety and malice of hell to answer; for it is easy to justify the goodness of God.

Quest. 1. 'Is it not certain that there is a world, in which is abundance of created goodness?' The earth is but a point as to all the world. There is a sun, and moon, and multitudes of glorious stars, which are many of them manifold greater than the earth. There are angels, there are men, there are variety of creatures in this lower part of the creation, which have all their excellency; all the men on earth

cannot by any contribution of their counsels, discern the ten thousandth part of the excellency of this little parcel of God's works. And as to the whole, it is next to nothing which we comprehend: every worm, every plant excelleth the highest human apprehension. Is there no physical goodness in all this unmeasurable, this harmonious, this glorious frame? Look about you, look upwards, and deny it if you can. And is there no moral goodness in holy men and angels? And is there no felicity and glorious goodness in all the heavens? What mind can be so black, as to deny all created goodness?

Quest. 2. 'Is not all the goodness of the whole creation communicated from God?' Did it make itself? Or who else made it? Are not all effects from their causes? And is he not the first cause? See what I have said to prove this fully in the aforesaid Treatise.

Quest. 3. 'Hath God made a world that is better than himself?' Could he give more goodness than he had to give? Must not he needs be better than all his works?

Quest. 4. 'Is he fit to be quarrelled with for want of goodness, who hath infinitely more goodness than the whole world besides?' More than sun and stars, heaven and earth, angels and men, all set together in all their single and their united, harmonious worth? If he be better than all, is he not most beyond accusation or exception?

Quest. 5. 'Must not God necessarily excel his works? Must he needs make every worm a god? Or must he make any god, or equal to himself?' Is not that a contradiction? And is there not necessarily an imperfection in all that is not God? Nothing can be so great, so wise, so good, so holy, so immutable, so self-sufficient, so blessed, as God.

Quest. 6. 'Is not God's creation a harmonious universe, of which individuals are but the parts?' Are not the parts for the whole, and their worth to be valued for the whole, or for the common ends? Must every pin in a watch, or every stitch in your garment, or every part of your house, or every member of your body, and every humour or excrement in it, have that excellency which may simply dignify itself in a compared or separated sense? Or rather, must it not have that excellency which belongeth to it as a part of the whole for the common end of all together? Is not that best, that

is best to the order, beauty, and usefulness of the universal frame ?

Quest. 7. ' Is it necessary to this end, or to prove God's goodness, that all individuals, or species of creatures, must be of the highest rank or excellency ?' Is God wanting in goodness, if every man be not an angel, or every angel made unchangeable, or every unlearned man a doctor, or every star a sun, or every cloud or clod a star, or every beast a man, or every worm an elephant, or every weed a rose, or every member a heart or head, or every excrement blood and spirits ? Will you think that a man doth reason like a man who thus disputeth, ' He that doth not do that which is best when he can do it, is not perfectly good, and therefore is not God. But he that maketh toads and serpents, and maketh the guts the passage of filthy excrements, when he could have made them equal with the heart, doth not do that which is best, when he can do it. Therefore he is not perfectly good ; therefore he is not God : therefore there is no God ; therefore there is no Creator ; therefore the world hath no cause, or made itself, and preserveth itself. Therefore I made myself, and must rule and preserve myself.' Conclude next, ' Therefore I will never suffer, nor die,' and thus prove the wisdom of such reasoning, if you can.

Quest. 8. If God made man and all things, ' did he not make them for himself, for the pleasure of his own will ? Must he not needs in reason be the end of all, who is the beginning and cause of all ?' And is not that means the best which is aptest to the end ? And doth not the proper goodness of a means consist in its aptitude to promote the end ? And then is not that the goodness of all creatures (partly to be what the Creator efficiently maketh them, and partly) to fulfil his will, and what creature hath not this goodness, as to the absolute will of his decrees, which all fulfil ?

Quest. 9. ' Are not now both these conclusions of infallible certainty, and therefore not at all contradictory ?' 1. That God is most good, because he is the cause of all the good in the whole creation ? 2. And yet that there are toads, serpents, darkness, death, sickness, pains, &c. which therefore are no whit inconsistent with his goodness ? Neither of them being capable of a denial, or of a sober doubt.

Quest. 10. ' Is not an angel and man, endued with reason and freewill, and left to choose or refuse his own rectitude

and felicity (or misery) capable of knowing, loving, serving, and enjoying God, if he will? and instructed by a perfect holy law (with rewards and punishments) to choose aright? I say, is not such a creature as noble and as meet for God to make as a stone, or a toad, or worm, or serpent? If God choose to please his own holy will, by making a world of such intellectual, free agents, whom he will (ordinarily) rule by the way of moral laws and motives; is this any disparagement to his wisdom and goodness? It is true, that such a mutable freewill is below a confirmed, immutable will. But it is as true, that a toad is below a man; and that Infinite wisdom thought not meet to make all his creatures of one rank or size, not to make all faces alike, nor all the stones in the street alike, but in wonderful variety. It is not then unbecoming God, to make a world of rational free-agents, under such a moral government by laws.

Quest. 11. If all these free-agents have abused their liberty and undone themselves, if he so far shew mercy to them all, as that they may be all happy if they will, and none of them shall perish but for wilful and final refusing of the saving means and mercy which is offered to them; and if they will, they may live with God himself, and Christ and angels in endless glory; and none shall lose this free-given felicity, but for final refusal and contempt, preferring certain vanity and dung before it. And if officers be commissioned, and means provided, to acquaint all, in several measures, with the reasons why they should choose heaven and holiness before the dirty pleasures of sin, and to importune them daily to such a choice; and if a life of mercies be granted to allure them, and afflictions to drive them, and examples to invite them to choose aright. I say, after all this, 'have any of these persons cause to complain, that God dealeth not mercifully with them?' Shall they, that will not accept of life and mercy offered them, accuse him as cruel that importuneth them to accept it?

Quest. 12. 'Is the goodness of a king to be judged of by the interest of murderers in the gaol?' When he restrained them by laws, when he warned them by legal penalties, when he encourageth and protecteth all the good; when the lives of the innocent need this severity against the wicked; when the commonwealth would take him to be bad, that would not restrain thieves and murderers by penalties. Yea,

though this king could, if he would, have set a constant guard on these men to have kept these men from murdering, but he thinketh meet only to govern them by laws ; will you rather argue, that the gaol is a place of misery, therefore the king is cruel, than. the rest of the kingdom flourish in prosperity and peace, therefore the king is wise and gracious. And is not this little dirty spot of earth, the next door to hell, a place defiled by wilful sin, and unfit to be the index of God's benignity, from whence we should take an estimate of it ?

Quest. 13. ' Do not all men in the world confess God's goodness first or last ? ' Do not all true believers, that are themselves, acknowledge that he is infinitely good, and good to them, and that his mercy is over all his works, and endureth for ever ? And do not the consciences of the damned grind and tear them for the contempt of goodness, and setting against mercy, even mercy to themselves ? This is the fuel that feedeth hell, not by way of delusion, but experimental conviction. If the man that doubteth of God's goodness and mercy to him, do despair, or fear damnation, he foolishly contradicteth himself. For hell and damnation is a state of misery and torment, in the loss, and in the conscience and sense of refused and abused mercy. If therefore God be not merciful to you, then you need not fear being damned for sinning against and refusing mercy. For that which is not, cannot be sinned against, or abused. If God be merciful, you may be saved if you will accept this mercy ; if he be not, you cannot in justice be damned for rejecting that mercy which was none. And if God be not merciful and just, he is not God. And if there be no God, there is none to damn you. But all confess, in heaven and hell, some with joy, and some with self-tormenting anguish, that God was inconceivably good and merciful.

Quest. 14. ' What if it were but one or two in a whole kingdom that were damned, and that only for obstinate unpersuadable, final refusal of grace and salvation, and all the rest of the world should be saved ; tell me, would you then still suspect God of cruelty, or deny his goodness ? ' If not, I further ask you :

Quest. 15. ' Have you so good acquaintance with the extent of the universe, the superior world, the number of angels and blessed spirits, as that you are sure that it is pro-

portionably more in the whole universe, that are miserable?' Though some peevish men have wrangled at what I have said of this in my forecited books, I am so far from flattering their self-conceited wisdom that I will say it over again, That it is agreed on by philosophers, that the earth, as to the universe, is no bigger than a point or inch is to the whole earth; we see over our heads, a wonderful sun, a multitude of fixed and unfixed stars, of wonderful magnitude, divers of them many times bigger than all the earth; besides the vast ethereal interspaces; we see in a tube or telescope, a marvellous likeness of the moon to this earth, with shades, inequalities, &c. Multitudes of stars in the galaxy and elsewhere, are discernible in the telescope, which without it no eye can see; little know we how far the world extendeth itself, beyond all these stars and sun which we can see; or whether there be millions of the like beyond our sight. The Scripture telleth us of innumerable angels, holy and glorious spirits, that attend Christ in the service of this lower world. No Scripture telleth us whether all the glorious or blessed spirits be thus employed as angels for mankind, or whether ten thousand thousandfold more be otherwise employed. No Scripture or reason telleth, whether sun or moon, stars and intermediate æther, be inhabited or not? It is temerity to affirm that they are. And it is a great temerity to say that they are not. It is lawful to doubt, and it is lawful to conjecture, that it is most probable they are, considering, 1. That life is the excellency of the creation, and the deadeest parts are the basest. 2. That the earth, and water, and air, are full of men, beasts, fishes, birds, worms, flies, &c. 3. That it is incredible to him that looketh upward, that sun, moon, stars, and æther, are baser regions than this dirty earth; and consequently that they are baser as to their use and inhabitants. These thoughts of an uncertain thing, are lawful, to him that will go no further than he hath evidence, and not make an uncertain thing seem certain; and certain it is, that spirits are innumerable. And though some of these have fallen to be devils, God hath not told us how many; nor can we know that it is one to a million of happier creatures. And can that man then, who is offended with God, not for damning a very few, but for the proportion of the damned in comparison of others, tell what he saith? Can he say, if God had cast off all this

earth, that it had been more than one of a million of millions as to the whole creation? It is true I cannot tell the number; but it is as true that when our foundation is sure, that God is infinitely wise and good, it is madness to accuse him as unwise, or evil, or cruel, for that which we must confess we do not know; and to talk against him in the dark. Stay till you see who dwelleth in all the superior regions, and then take yourselves for fitter discerners of your Maker's ways.

Quest. 16. 'Are you well acquainted with the nature and degrees of the future miseries which tempt you to think that God is cruel?' They are not all of one degree; what if much of them be still voluntary to the miserable souls? The devils who are now tormented in hell, are yet inhabitants of the air, and exercised in voluntary acts of malice. I take it to be no small degree of hell which the ungodly choose, and love, and possess among us here on earth, and will not be dissuaded from; they are without all holy communion with God, and they would be so; they are out of heaven, and they would be so; they are debased and confined to sensual pleasures, and worldly vanities, and they will be so; they are the drudges of the devil, and the servants of the flesh, and the slaves of men, and they would be so; they are defiled with sin, and imprisoned in their own concupiscence, and they would be so; they are corrupted, and tantalized, and vexed, and tossed up and down by their irregular desires; in a word, they have the plague of sin, and have neither holiness nor true happiness, and so they will have it to be, and will not be cured; now these tempted persons can see a misery in pain; but can see no such evil in sin, for which such pain should be inflicted; when as sin itself, and that which they are willing of, is so great a part of their misery, as that in this life, the rest is as nothing to it. And though, no doubt, much will be involuntary hereafter, we know not what the proportion will be between the voluntary and involuntary part.

And what makes these men that they do not pity a drunkard, a fornicator, a worldling, a sensual lord or gentleman, that hath no better than the shadows which he chooseth? Neither the tempted, nor they themselves, would call God cruel if he would let them so live in health for ever; even a healthful beggar would call God merciful if he might

never die, nor be more miserable. But princes or lords would call him cruel, if he should put them into the beggar's or labourer's case. You accuse not God as cruel for making toads and serpents, worms and vermin, because they are not troubled with their own condition ; but if you could imagine them to have the knowledge how much happier men are, the case would alter. Or if God should change men into toads and serpents, you would call him unmerciful ; when yet he is no more bound antecedently to man than unto them. Thus because these tempted persons have, as Adam when his eyes were opened, a disquieting knowledge, to know good and evil penally ; their own apprehension (as Adam's of his nakedness) maketh that seem cruelty, which seemed a fruit of goodness before.

The sum is, when you come into another world, and see what manner of punishment it is that God exerciseth on the damned (as well as on how many) you will then be perfectly satisfied, that there is nothing but that amiable justice, which is the fruit of holiness, goodness, and wisdom in it all ; and you shall see nothing in the punishment of the miserable which you shall either blame or wish were otherwise, if you come to heaven.

To which let me add, when you come to see the heavenly glory, and how the God of infinite goodness hath advanced such innumerable hosts (if not worlds) of men and angels into such wonderful felicity, and compare this with the sufferings of the devil and of his damned followers, instead then of quarrelling with the goodness of God, you will be wrapt up in the admirations and praises of it with full delights, to all eternity.

Quest. 17. ' And tell me, is he fit to entertain suspicions and quarrels with God, who knoweth God to be God, and knoweth himself to be but a man ? ' I speak not only in respect of our inferiority, as the potsherd should not quarrel with the potter ; but in respect of our great and certain ignorance. Are we not puzzled about the poorest worm and pile of grass, whose manifold mysteries no mortal man can yet discover ? Are we not grossly ignorant about every thing (even visible and palpable) which we see, and touch, and have to do with ? Do we not know that we know but little, even of ourselves, or of any thing about us in the world ? And shall the darkened soul, while it must operate

in such a puddle of brains and humours, be so madly proud, as to presume of a knowledge, which findeth out errors and badness in God, who is infinitely wise and good? Nothing is more sure than that God is most wise and good; and nothing should be more easily known to us, than that we are very blind and bad. And if such wretches then cannot reconcile their thoughts about God's works, should they not rather suspect themselves than him? Suspect, did I say; should they not take it as the surest verity, that it is God, that is not only justifiable, but infinitely amiable and laudable, and that it is worse than brutishness, for such moles to be his accusers?

Quest. 18. Yea, 'is this accusing God a fit employment for that person, who liveth in a land of mercies: who hath been bred up in mercy, preserved by mercy, yea, differenced by saving mercy from the ungodly, who hath been called from blindness, carnality, and profaneness, and entertained many a time in holy worship with God; who hath been washed in Christ's blood, and justified from so many and grievous sins, and made of an enemy an adopted child, and of a heir of hell a heir of heaven, and all this by the tender mercies of a provoked God, a gracious Redeemer, and a holy Sanctifier?' Shall this person, I say, this, be one that instead of praising God with the raptures of continual joy, shall turn his accuser? O let the guilty that readeth this stop here, and fall down on his knees to God, and melt into tears in the sense of such unkindness.

Quest. 19. 'But can a child of God be possibly guilty of so great a sin as this?'

Ans. I speak not now of the malignant atheist; but of the melancholy, tempted persons. Alas, it is the melancholy disease, and the devil, more than he. God pitieth his children's frowardness, especially when necessitated naturally by diseases; and he that pardoned peevish Jonas, that said, "I do well to be angry to the death;" and complaining Job; and excused his sleepy disciples with "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," will not condemn an upright soul, for the effect of a feverish deliration, or a melancholy that overcomes his natural power of resistance.

Quest. 20. 'Would you thus argue or quarrel against God's greatness and wisdom, as you do against his goodness?' You suspect him to be unmerciful, because he cur-

eth not men's sins, and preventeth not their damnation. And have you not the like occasion to argue against his other perfections? Do you think he reasoneth soberly that saith, 'He that maketh asses when he might have made them men, or maketh idiots, or maketh stones that know nothing; he that is the governør of such a foolish, distracted, confused world as mankind is, is foolish himself, or unskilful in government, or wanteth wisdom. But God doth thus.' Is he not worse than a fool that will accuse his God of folly? Doth not the admirable harmony of all the world, and his wonderful work in every creature, prove his incomprehensible wisdom? And what would you say to him that should thus reason: 'He that maketh impotent worms, that suffereth the good to die, that suffereth the tyrants of the earth to persecute his church and cause, is impotent, and not almighty. But so doth God?' Would you not say, 'I have the wonderful frame of heaven and earth, the sun and stars, the sea and land, to prove to me that he is Almighty. This therefore is a proved foundation truth, to which all doubts must be reduced?' And if you dare not be so impudent as to deny his Omniscience or Omnipotence, when you think there is error or impotency in his works, why will you any more deny his goodness, when you dream that there is badness in his works? Do you not know, that power, wisdom, and goodness are God's three essential principles of operation, virtues, or properties? And that they are none of them greater or less than other? And that his goodness (though not as to be measured by human interest) is equal to his wisdom and his greatness? And do you not know, that to deny any one of the three, yea, to deny the perfection of any one of them, is to deny that there is any God? And is he sober that will argue, 'There are frogs and toads, there are worms and asses, there are fools and miserable sinners, therefore there is no God.' When as there could neither be any of these, nor any world or being, if there were no God?

Quest. 21. Lastly, now consider, 'whether evidently, the root of all this sin be not (besides melancholy and satan) the power of selfishness, and sensual or fleshly interest.' Alas! poor men, that were made for their God, to rejoice wholly in pleasing him, and to shew forth the lustre of his glory, are fallen unto themselves and flesh; and now they that should

wholly devote and refer themselves to God, do strive to make God a servant to themselves, and measure his goodness by the standard of their fleshly sense and interest ; and God shall be with them no longer good, that is, no longer God, than he will give them their wills, and serve their flesh, and keep them from crosses, and losses, and pains, and govern the world according to their fancies ; and when they are committing this odious, self-exalting idolatry, and abasing God, even then will they judge themselves both wiser, and more merciful than he. Yea, when a melancholy man despaireth in the sense of his own sin and badness, at that very time he thinketh himself more merciful than the God of infinite goodness, and accuseth his God for being more cruel than he himself. O man, into what distraction and confusion art thou fallen, when thou departest from thy God, and sinkest into that blind and wretched self.

And tell me, what if but the wills of all the poor, the pained, the dying, &c. were but reconciled to their suffering state. Would that which pleaseth the will be matter of any complaint ? You may see then that it is not God's providence, &c. but the wills and ways of sinners, that are the diseased causes of all their wranglings. And if our wills were cured, and reduced to God's will, we should find no fault with him ; if I can but be truly willing of imprisonment, poverty, or death, how can I feel any thing in it to complain of ? When even sinners, as aforesaid, do obstinately here take their misery for their happiness, and are contented with it so far as it is voluntary.

By that time these twenty questions are answered, the accusations of God as wanting goodness, will all turn to the accuser's shame.

II. I am next briefly to detect the false opinions which do ordinarily cause these persons' errors.

1. It is false doctrine to affirm that God condemneth the greatest part of his intellectual creatures (as I have shewed) though he condemn never so many of this ungodly world.

2. It is not true that God decreeth to condemn any man but for sin, (for sin, I say, as the cause of his damnation).

3. God decreeth to condemn none at age (which I add but to exclude foolish cavils) for Adam's sin only ; nor for

any other sin only that is not conjoined with an obstinate, final impenitency, and rejecting offered mercy, and neglecting means appointed for their salvation.

4. God's decrees do cause no man's sin (nor his damnation any further than as supposing sin), for Dr. Twisse himself still professeth, 1. That reprobation is an immanent act, and 'nihil ponit in objecto,' putteth nothing at all into the person. 2. And that reprobation inferreth no necessity of sin or misery, but that which is called 'necessitas consequentiæ,' and not any 'necessitas consequentis;' and Arminius and all confess that God's bare foreknowledge causeth or inferreth a 'necessity consequentiæ,' which truly is but a logical necessity in order of argumentation, when one thing is proved by another; and not by physical necessity in order of causation, as one thing is caused by another.

And whereas they say, 'Then man might have frustrated God's decree.' I ask them, whether man can frustrate God's foreknowledge; suppose God to foreknow sin without decreeing it (of which more anon), is not this a good argument, 'All that God foreknoweth will certainly come to pass. But God foreknoweth, e. g. Judas's sin, therefore it will certainly come to pass.' And what of all this? It doth not come to pass, because God foreknoweth it, any more than the sun will rise to-morrow, because you foreknow it.

And if you say, that no power can frustrate God's foreknowledge, I answer, they are delusory words of one that knoweth not what he saith. For it is one thing to have power to make God ignorant, and another thing to have power to do otherwise than that which he foreknoweth you will do. No man hath power to make God ignorant; but all sinners may have power to do otherwise than that which God foreknoweth they will do. For God doth not foreknow that, e. g. Gehezi, shall not have power to forbear a lie; but only that he will not forbear it. Yea, more, God's foreknowledge doth prove that sinners have power to do otherwise; for that which God foreknoweth will be. But God foreknoweth that men will abuse their power to sin, or will sin when they had power to do otherwise, therefore it will be so in the event.

Now if you will call their power to do otherwise, a power to frustrate God's foreknowledge, you will but speak

foolishly. For the power itself is foreknown; and the object of knowledge 'in esse cognito,' is not after the act of knowledge. And if the person will not actually sin, God could not foreknow that he will sin. So that foreknowledge is here (when it is not casual) but a medium in a syllogism, and inferreth only the necessity of the consequence in arguing, and doth not cause the thing foreknown.

Now when Dr. Twisse saith, that all the schoolmen agree, that no necessity, 'consequentis,' or of causation, but only 'consequentiaë,' doth follow the decree of reprobation, see how far he and Arminius are in this agreed, (though I know some give another sense of 'necessitas consequentiaë'). But I come closer to the matter yet.

4. God decreeth no man's sin; neither Adam's, nor any other's. He may decree the effect, which sinners accomplish (as the death of Christ), and he may overrule men in their sin, and bring good out of it, &c. But sin is not a thing that he can will or cause, and so not decree, which signifieth a volition.

5. God cannot be proved to decree, or will the permission of man's sin. For to permit is nothing. It is but not to hinder; which is no act: and to decree and will is a positive act. And if you fain God to have a positive volition or nolition, of every thing, or negative, then he must have positive decrees of every mere possible atom, sand, worm, name, word, thought of man, &c. That such and such a nothing shall never be; whereas, there needeth no more to keep any thing from being (in this case) than God's not causing it, not willing it, not decreeing it. The creature's active nature, disposition, objects, and circumstances, are here pre-supposed; and the impedition necessary, is by act, or subtraction of these aforesaid, and God's 'non-agere' needs no positive decree. I must tell the learned reader, that this room will not serve to answer his foreseen objections. But I hope I have done it sufficiently elsewhere.

6. God hath not only decreed to give, but actually given a great deal of mercy to them that perish, which had a natural tendency to their salvation. Christ hath so far died for all, as that none shall perish for want of a sufficiency in the satisfaction made: he hath purchased and given for all a grant or gift of himself, with pardon, justification, adoption and right to glory, on condition of acceptance

(where the Gospel cometh). In a word, so that none of them shall perish, that do not finally refuse the grace and salvation offered them.

7. Men are not impenitent and unbelievers for want of that called natural faculty, or power to choose and refuse aright; but for want of a right disposition of their own wills; and by such a moral impotency, which is indeed their viciousness, and the wickedness of their wills, and doth not excuse, but aggravate the sin. (See Mr. Truman of "Natural and Moral Impotency.")

8. To rectify men's wicked wills and dispositions, God giveth them a world of means; the whole creation, and documents of providence; all the precepts, promises, threats of Scripture; preaching, example, mercies, judgments, patience and inward motions of the Spirit; all which might do much to men's conversion and salvation, if they would but do what they could on their own part.

9. Adam could have stood, when he fell, without any more grace than that which he abused and neglected. God's grace, which was not effectual to him, was as much as was necessary to his standing, if he would have done his best: and it was left to his freewill, to have made that help effectual by improvement. He fell, not because he could not stand, but because he would not.

10. For aught any can prove, multitudes that believe not now, but perish, may have rejected a help as sufficient to their believing, as Adam's was to his standing.

11. All men have power to do more good, and avoid more evil than they do; and he that will not do what he can do, justly suffereth.

12. Heathens and infidels are not left unredeemed under the remediless curse, and covenant of innocency, which we broke in Adam; but are all brought by the redemption wrought by Christ, under a law or terms of grace. 1. God made a covenant of grace with all mankind in Adam; (Gen. iii. 15.) who was by tradition to acquaint his posterity with it, as he did to Cain and Abel, the ordinances of oblation and sacrifice. 2. This covenant was renewed with all mankind in Noah. 3. This covenant is not repealed, otherwise than by a more perfect edition to them that have the plenary Gospel. 4. The full Gospel-covenant is made for all, as to the tenor of it, and the command of preaching and offering

it to all. 5. They that have not this edition, may yet be under the first edition. 6. The Jews, under the first edition, were saved without believing in this determinate person of Jesus, or that he should die for sin, and rise again, and send down the Spirit: for the apostles believed it not beforehand; (Luke xviii. 34. John xii. 16. Luke ix. 45. Mark ix. 34. Luke xxiv. 21, 25, 26. Acts i. 6—8.) yet were they then in a state of saving grace, as appeareth by John xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. throughout. 7. The rest of the world that had not the same supernatural revelation, were not then bound to believe so much as the Jews were, about the Messiah. 8. God himself told them all, that they were not under the unremedied curse of the covenant of innocency, by giving them a life full of those mercies which they had forfeited, which all did tend to lead them to repentance, and to seek after God (Rom. ii. 4. Acts xvii. 27.), and “find him; yea, he left not himself without witness, for that which may be known of him, and his invisible things are manifested and clearly seen in his works;” so that the wicked are without excuse; Rom. i. 19, 20. Acts xiv. 17. So that all heathens are bound “to believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;” (Heb. xi. 6.) And are all under the duty of using certain means, in order to their own recovery and salvation, and to believe that they are not commanded to do this in vain: so that God’s own providence by a course of such mercies, which cannot stand with the execution of the unremedied, violated law of innocency, together with his obliging all men to repentance, and to the use of a certain course of means, in order to their salvation, is a promulgation of a law of grace, according to the first edition, and distinguisheth man from unredeemed devils.

And they that say that all the infidel world have all this mercy, duty, means and hope, without any redemption or satisfaction of Christ as the procuring cause, are in the way to say next, ‘That the church’s mercies too, might have been given without Christ.’ 9. “Of a truth, God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him;” Acts x. 34, 35. For “God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and incorruptibility, eternal life;” Rom. ii. 6, 7. “Glory, honour, and peace, to

every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek ;" ver. 10. " For there is no respect of persons with God ;" ver. 11. " For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another ;" ver. 14, 15. And they shall be judged according to that law which they were under, natural or mosaical, " even by Jesus Christ ;" ver. 12. 16. And it is the work of the Spirit promised to believers, to write the law of God in their hearts.

11. Though a special promise was made to Abraham, as an eminent believer, and the Jewish nation were the peculiar people of God, advanced to greater privileges than any others in the world ; yet were they not the whole kingdom of God the Redeemer, nor the only people that were in a covenant of grace, or in a state of salvation. For Shem was alive after Abraham's death, who was not like to be less than a king, and to have a kingdom and a people governed according to his fidelity. And Melchisedec was a king of righteousness and peace, not like to be Shem by the situation of his country. And a righteous king would govern in righteousness. Job and his friends are evidences of the same truth. And we have no proof or probability that all Abraham's seed by Ishmael, and Esau, and Keturah, were apostates, for they continued circumcision. And what all the rest of the world was we know not, save that in general most grew idolatrous, and the Canaanites in special. But that they all apostatized from the covenant of grace made with Adam and Noah, there is no proof. We have not the history of any of their countries fully, so as to determine of such cases. In Nineveh God ruled by that law of grace which called them to repent, and spared them upon their belief and repentance ; " Because he was a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth of the evil ;" Jonah iv. 2.

And that God dealeth not with mankind now as the mere judge of the violated law of innocency ; he declareth not only by the full testimony of his providence, or mercies given to the sinful world ; but also by the very name, which he proclaimeth unto Moses (which signifieth his nature,

and his mind towards others, and not what he is to the Jews alone) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." All which is inconsistent with the relation of God, as a judge of a people, only under the curse of an unremedied violated law, and unredeemed, though he add, "and that will by no means clear the guilty." &c. that is, will neither judge them innocent that are guilty of the crime, nor judge them to life that are guilty of death, according to the tenor of the law which they are under; 'Purificando non purificabit' as the literal version; that is, will not judge unjustly, by acquitting him that is to be condemned, or as the Chaldee paraphrase hath it, 'not justifying those that are not converted.'

It is enough for us therefore to know, that the visible church hath manifold privileges above all others; Rom. iii. 1—3., &c. And that salvation is more easy, sure, and plentiful, where the Gospel cometh, than with any others; and that we have therefore great cause to rejoice with thankfulness for our lot, and that the poor world lieth in wickedness, and must be pitied, prayed for, and helped to our power, and that "God is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe; and that he is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works;" and that he will never damn one soul that loveth him as God. But what is in the hearts of all men in the world, and consequently how they shall be used at last, he only that searcheth the heart can tell; and it is neither our duty nor our interest, nor possible to us, to know it of all particulars, much less to conclude, that none among them have such love, who believe him to be infinitely good, and to be to them a merciful, pardoning God. And we know withal, that all they that know not Jesus Christ, as this determinate person that was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, buried, rose again, &c., do yet receive all the aforesaid mercies by him, and not by any other name or mediation, nor yet without his purchasing mediation.

13. And if besides all the mercy that God sheweth to others, he do antecedently and positively elect certain persons, by an absolute decree, to overcome all their resistances

of his Spirit, and to draw them to Christ, and by Christ to himself, by such a power and way as shall infallibly convert and save them, and not leave the success of his mercy, and his Son's preparations, to the bare uncertainty of the mutable will of depraved man, what is there in this that is injurious to any others? Or that representeth God unmerciful to any but such whose eye is evil, because he is good, and as a free benefactor, may give more mercy to some than others of equal demerits? If they that hold no grace but what is universal, and left, as to the success, to the will of man, as the determining cause, do think that this is well consistent with the mercifulness of God; surely they that hold as much universal grace as the former; and that indeed all have so much, as bringeth and leaveth the success to man's will, and deny to no man any thing which the other give, do make God no less merciful than they; but more, if they moreover assert a special decree and grace of God, which with a chosen number, shall antecedently infallibly secure his ends in their repentance, faith, perseverance, and salvation. Is this any detraction from, or diminution of his universal grace? Or rather a higher demonstration of his goodness? As it is no wrong to man that God maketh angels more holy, immutable and happy.

14. And what if men cannot here tell how to resolve the question 'Whether any, or how many are ever converted and saved, by that mere grace which we call sufficient, or rather necessary, and common to those that are not converted; and whether man will ever make a saving, determining improvement of it;' must plain truth be denied, because difficulties cannot easily be solved? And yet in due place I doubt not but I have shewed, that this question itself is formed upon false suppositions, and is capable of a satisfactory solution.

15. I conclude in general, that nothing is more sure, than that God is most powerful, wise, and good, and that all his works, to those that truly know them, do manifest all these in conjunction and perfect harmony; and that as to his decrees and providences, he is the cause of all good, and of no sin in act or habit, and that our sin and destruction is of ourselves, and of him is our holiness and salvation; and that he attaineth all his ends as certainly, as if men's will had no liberty, but were acted by physical necessita-

tion : and yet that man's will hath as much natural liberty, as if God had not gone before it with any decree of the event, and as much moral liberty as we have moral virtue or holiness.

And these principles I have laid down in a little room, that tempted persons may see, that it is our dark and puzzled brains, and our selfish, diseased hearts, that are the cause of our quarrelling with God, his decrees and providences ; and as soon as we come to ourselves and are cured, these odious apprehensions vanish, and God appeareth as the unclouded sun, in the lustre of his amiable goodness : and when we come to heaven, we shall see to our joy, and his glory, that heaven, earth and hell, declare him to be all perfectly good, without any mixture of evil in himself, or in any of his word or works. And we shall find all our sinful suspicions and murmurings turned into a joyful consent to the angelical praises. Psal. cxxxvi. 1. 2. 26. &c. " O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy is for ever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven, for his mercy is for ever ; Rev. iv. 8. 11. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come— Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.— Rev. vii. 12. Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy ;" Psal. cxlv. 8, 9. " The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth : he loveth righteousness and judgment ; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord ;" Psal. xxxiii. 4, 5. " O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men ;" Psal. xxxi. 19. " O therefore that men (instead of quarrelling with his unknown mysteries) would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ;" Ps. cvii. 8. 15. 21. 31.

In the conclusion, I take it to be wholesome advice to those that are under this temptation :

1. That they will oft read over the Psalms of praise, and think when they read them, whether David and the ancient

church, were not more likely to know what they said, than a self-conceited, or a melancholy tempted sinner?

That they would consider, who it is that is the grand enemy of the glory of God's goodness, and they shall soon find that it is none other than the devil; none but he that is most evil, can most envy Infinite Goodness his honour. And is the devil fit to be believed against God? And that after the warning of our first parents' ruin, which befel them for believing satan, when he slandered both God's wisdom, truth, and goodness to them?

3. That they would bethink them to what end it is, that the tempter, and the enemy of God, do thus deny his goodness. Is it not a plain act of malice against God and us? Is it not that he may disgrace God as evil, and rob him of his glory; and also that he may hinder man from loving him, and so destroy all piety, and virtue, and goodness in the world? Who can love him whom he believeth to be bad, and so unlovely? And what grace or happiness can there be without the love of God?

4. That they would think what horrid wickedness this sin containeth (where melancholy and involuntariness do not extenuate it). Is it any better than a denying that there is any God? As is said before; to be God, is to be perfectly powerful, wise and good: and if there be none such, there can be no God. And then who made the world, and all that is good in it by derivated goodness? Yea, is it not to represent the most amiable blessed God, in satan's image (who is most evil and a murderer from the beginning;" John viii. 44.) that so men may hate him, and fly from him as they do from devils? And can you tell how great a crime this is?

5. That they would consider, how this impious conceit is calculated for the licensing of all manner of villany in the world, and to root out all the relics of goodness from among mankind. For who can expect that any man should be better than his Maker, and that he should have any good, who denieth God to be good?

6. That they would labour hard to be better themselves; for he that hath a true created goodness, is thereby prepared to relish and admire God's primitive uncreated goodness: whereas a wicked, or a guilty sinner, cannot much value that which he is so unsuitable to, and which he thinks will

be to him a consuming fire. "Truly God is good to Israel, and to such as are of a clean heart;" Psal. lxxiii. 1. But he that liveth in the love of sin, will be doubting of the love of God, and fearful of his wrath, and unfit to relish and delightfully perceive his goodness. "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him;" Psal. xxxiv. 8.

7. Study God's love as manifested in Christ; then you shall see what man on earth may see. But think not falsely, narrowly, or basely of his office, his performance, or his covenant.

8. Dwell in the believing foresight of the celestial glory; the reflections of which may wrap up a believing soul on earth, into ecstasies of gratitude and delight.

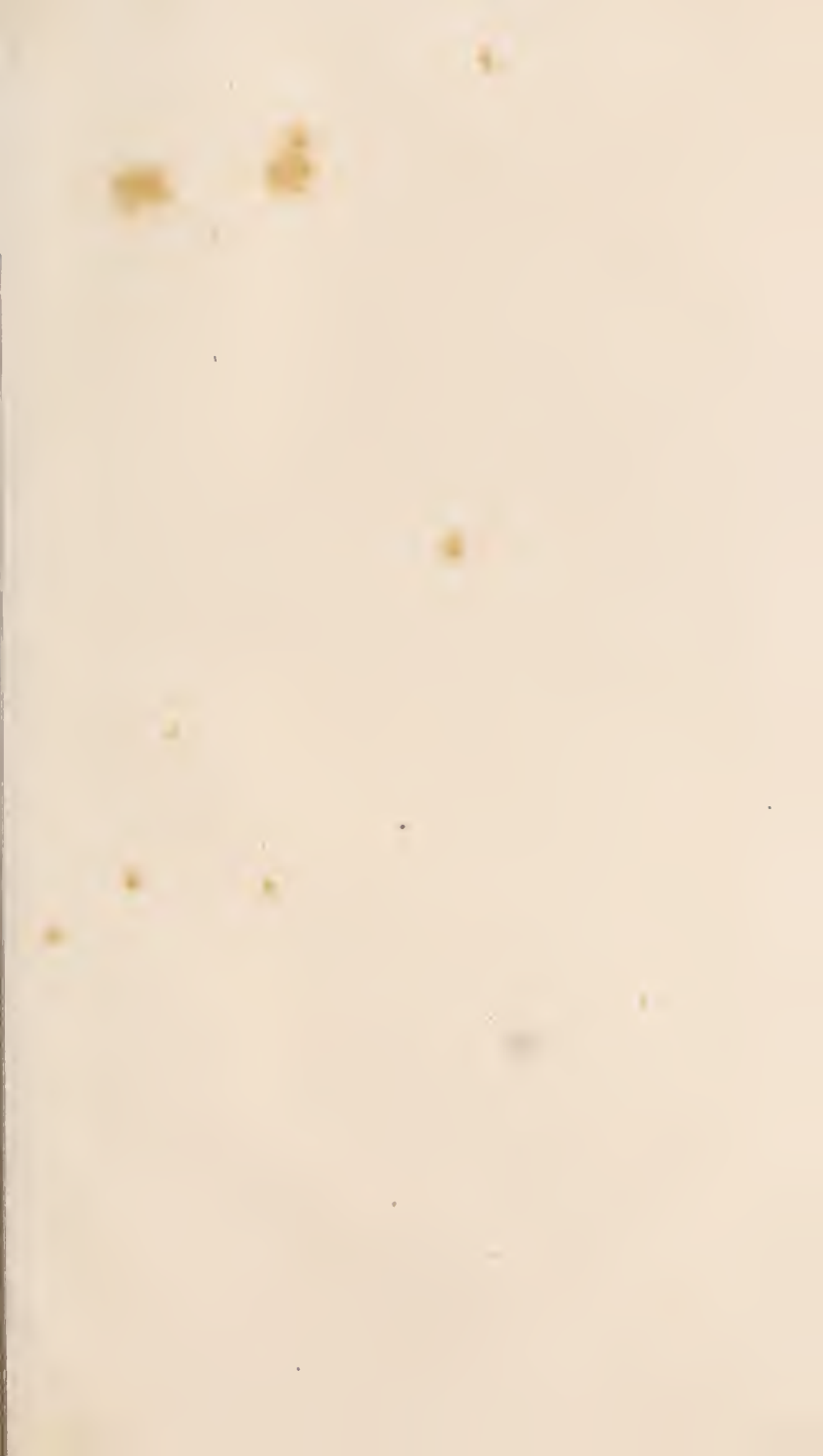
9. Remember what goodness there is in the holiness of God, which is demonstrated in his severest justice; yea, what mercy it is to forewarn men of the punishment of sin, that they may want no necessary means to escape it.

10. Remember how unfit the selfish interest of obstinate despisers of grace and salvation is, to be the measure or index of the goodness of God: and how much more credible the concordant testimony of the heavenly host is, who live in the love of Love itself, and are everlastingly delighted in the praises of the infinite greatness, wisdom, and goodness of the most perfect, blessed, glorious God.

END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.



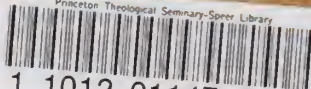








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